ENGLISH SOCIETY

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN CONTEMPORARY ART

RANDALL DAVIES, F.S.A.

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Queen Charlotte with the Princess Royal, and the Duchess of Ancaster.
From a Water-colour Drawing by Francis Cotes, R.A.
British Museum.

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BY

RANDALL DAVIES, F.S.A.

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PREFACE

Apart from any question of sentiment, that may sanctify one age or execrate another, the Eighteenth Century is a period that is exceptionally interesting to glance over in search of illustrations of Society in this country. For, as it happens, it is a period of continuous development in the art of painting; from a time, that is to say, when there was practically no English painting at all, till the arrival of Hogarth and his minor contemporaries; from him to the great age of Reynolds and Gainsborough; and though after these two nothing greater could be expected, yet in the close of the century, when their influence was still paramount, and when the wider diffusion of artistic influences that followed on the establishment of the Royal Academy was giving a stimulus to almost every kind of art, it can hardly be said that there was any retrogression.

At the same time, the choice of illustrations for a subject of this sort must necessarily prove to be a matter of some little difficulty; for while our public galleries are confined to exhibiting only works of the first importance, the minor pictures, from which the bulk of the selection would naturally be made, are mostly in country houses, and not easily available for reproduction. But the reader will, I hope, so far appreciate the series here given as to share the gratitude I feel for the kindness of both owners and custodians in helping me to make it so full of interest and variety. To others, also, whom I have invoked and "found such fair assistance," I wish to acknowledge myself most gratefully indebted.

R. D.

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English Society of the Eighteenth Century in Contemporary Art

CHAPTER I

THE AUGUSTAN AGE

That Society flourished in England under Queen Anne and King George I. is abundantly proved by contemporary records, but they are not those of the brush; and while our impressions of France during the same period are coloured by the exquisite fancies of Watteau, Lancret, and Pater, it is to books and letters that we owe our knowledge of nearly all that was going on in England. Tradition, it is true, has lent a tinge of colour to the black and white of history in picturing Queen Anne sitting in the sun; but no painter has preserved the incident—or was it habit?—in one of those matchless *Fêtes Galantes* that were so freely and enchantingly being painted in France across the Channel; and it is only in imagination, tinged perhaps with sentiment, that we are permitted to think of her as other than a very prosaic and matter-of-fact lady. Had Watteau (who actually did visit England) found favour with Princes, and left us richer for one or two pictures of them, what a different impression we might now enjoy in recalling the glories of that Augustan age! At Hampton Court, perhaps, he might have caught them, in the full bloom of the chestnuts then but lately planted, and shown us the last of the Stuarts linked hand in hand with the fair Jennings, and surrounded by Swift, Addison, Harley, and Steele, all in the loosest and lightest of silks, listening to Marlborough playing a lute; but, as it is, we have nothing better than the sort of art that may be seen in a couple of minor pictures at Kensington

Palace, the one a formal and stilted representation of the Queen addressing the House of Lords, with the then all-powerful Sarah standing behind her, painted by Peter Tillemans; the other a slightly more interesting piece by Peter Angelis, of an installation of four Knights of the Garter in 1713.

In the latter there is something like an attempt at a picture, for Angelis (or Angillis, as it ought to be), who was a native of Dunkirk, but worked in England long enough to be noticed by Walpole, had a certain vogue as a painter of landscapes in which figures were introduced, though the present example hardly justifies Walpole's statement that his manner was a mixture of Teniers and Watteau, with more grace than the former and more nature than the latter. It is interesting, however, as containing portraits not only of the Queen, but of four such prominent and doughty knights as Harley, Earl of Oxford; Henry Grey, Duke of Kent; Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough; and John, Earl Poulett, all of whom were considerable figures in their time.

France, however, was then possessed of all that was really rare and beautiful in painting; but she was also singing to her children "*Marlbrook s'en va-t'en guerre!*" and could spare but little of her artistic wealth for the English, who, for their part, were far too much occupied in reading "The Conduct of the Allies," and in preening themselves upon the Protestant succession, to care very much for the fine arts.

At the same time there seems to have been a vogue, at least among the fine ladies, for *la mode Française*, in this as in every other age of which any records exist of English Society. In the matter of dress and fashion it was never beneath British dignity to learn from their cultured though hereditary enemies; and one of the earliest satirical prints of this century, published in 1707, when Europe was still ringing with Marlborough's victories, exposes this weakness, among others, with startling candour. These so-called satirical prints, of which some thousands are catalogued in the collections at the British Museum, are by no means the least interesting source of information about any period; and in the absence of anything of artistic importance at this particular time, it is worth while to glance

at a few examples. Most of them may be referred to some particular event or topic, such as the South Sea Bubble, Dr. Sacheverell, or the Hell Fire Clubs; but there are some that are general in their application, and, without attaching too much weight to them, we may get some sharp hints on men and manners from these crude and outspoken publications. The one in question, for instance, is so sweeping an indictment of a period which we are used to call Augustan, that even its title leaves us breathless—"The Ass Age, or the world in Hieroglyphick, an amusement greatly resembling the Humours of the Present Time." Its range is wide, and the representations of various social units all mounted on asses are fully explained in verse. A few of the couplets on the lady of quality will show the sort of thing aimed at, even if (to the cynic) they do not seem to differentiate this particular epoch from any other:—

"Her Ladyship may next the ass engage
Mounted with all her modish equipage:
Pride and new fashions are her daily prayers,
And all must come from France that e'er she wears.
Nothing but what is foreign must be seen;
Her talk is French, her very air and mien,
With French cold-tea to cure her of the spleen.
Her page and monkey, too, from France must come,
For she despises everything at home;
Nor had she yielded with such complaisance
To ride, but that she thought the ass might come from France!
With Pride incurable e'en let her sit,
Nothing, unless the ass, can teach her wit."

Another, probably published a year or two later, is "The Tea Table," to which an interminable length of doggerel is subjoined. "The Coffehous Mob" is the title of a third that forms the frontispiece to a volume called "Vulgus Brittanicus, or the British Hudibras," which was published in 1710, the author being the somewhat notorious Ned Ward.

"The Diabolical Masquerade, or the Dragon Feast, as acted by the Hell Fire Club at Somerset House in the Strand," is a subject that might easily be put aside as beyond the limits of fact or even probability—the scene is a debauch in which a party seated at table are disguised as Pluto, Proserpine, and various animals and demons—were

it not for an order of the Privy Council which was advertised in all the newspapers (April 28, 1721) "for the suppression of the blasphemous societies called Hell Fire Clubs." It appears to be a fact that there were no less than three of these clubs or societies existing in London, to which upwards of forty persons of quality of both sexes belonged, and there even exists a picture, belonging to Sir Compton Domvile, which is actually inscribed "The Hell Fire Club," and is a portrait of Lord Santry and four of his companions in this curious phase of social excitement.

There are plenty of other sources, too, from which it may be gathered that the reigns of Queen Anne and her successor were not all that the fairest fancies have painted them; and while the names of Addison and Steele are the first to occur to any well-regulated mind as those of the representative men of the time, there is Defoe to be reckoned with; and there is also Mrs. Manley, as Steele, indeed, found for himself. The "New Atalantis"—an island very remote from Bacon's with one syllable less—was peopled by an aristocracy with such romantic histories that it is much to be regretted that it was never illustrated. Mrs. Haywood's "Utopia," too,—which again must not be confused with Sir Thomas More's—would have been a good subject for any contemporary pencil.

As for painters of portraits, the only one of any note in Queen Anne's reign was, of course, Sir Godfrey Kneller; and he was already past his prime; or, as Walpole puts it, was lessened by his reputation as he chose to make it subservient to his fortune. "Had he lived in a country," says Walpole, "where his merit had been rewarded according to the worth of his productions, instead of the number, he might have shone in the roll of the greatest masters; but he united the highest vanity with the most consummate negligence of character—at least, where he offered one picture to fame, he sacrificed twenty to lucre; and he met with customers of so little judgment, that they were fond of being painted by a man who would gladly have disowned his works the moment they were paid for."

At the present time indeed Kneller's reputation is very low, and the makers of a hundred popular or learned books on his more

fashionable successors have not as yet received the encouragement necessary to produce even a line about him. That he prostituted his capabilities to making a fortune is of course notorious, and it is doubtless true that he himself said that history painting only revived the memory of the dead who could give him no testimony of their gratitude, but that when he painted the living he gained wherewithal to live from their bounty. So great is the number of his inferior portraits, in fact, of which he scarcely more than touched the faces, that it is no wonder he is neglected, and the fact that he was a pupil of Rembrandt, and a very capable one, forgotten. Walpole, to be sure, while none too sparing of his censure, throws as much of his blame on the age in which he lived as on the painter himself. "His airs of heads have extreme grace," he says, "the hair admirably disposed, and if the locks seem unnaturally elevated, it must be considered as an instance of the painter's art. He painted in an age when the women erected edifices of three storeys on their heads. Had he represented such preposterous attire, in half a century his works would have been ridiculous. To lower their dress to a natural level when the eye was accustomed to pyramids would have shocked their prejudices and diminished the resemblance. He took a middle way, and weighed out ornament to them of more natural materials. Still it must be owed there is too great a sameness in his airs, and no imagination at all in his compositions. See but a head, it interests you—uncover the rest of the canvas, and you wonder faces so expressive could be employed so insipidly. In truth, the age demanded nothing correct, nothing complete."

Of the lesser lights one or two are worth mentioning, if only to prove the bare existence of any sort of painting at this period. Boit, for instance, whose father was a Frenchman, and who was born at Stockholm, came to England to practise his trade of jeweller; but his ill success drove him to teaching children in the country to draw. In this profession he established the precedent of falling in love with one of his pupils, and the affair being discovered—he had engaged her to marry him—he was thrown into prison. In that confinement, says Walpole, which lasted two years,

he studied enamelling, an art to which he fixed on his return to London, and practised with the greatest success. The prices he obtained were extraordinary, thirty guineas for a copy of Seymour's picture by Kneller, sixty for a lady's head, and for a few plates £500.

His principal achievement, however, was in obtaining an advance of no less than £1700 for the execution of a plate of but 24 × 18 inches representing the Queen, Prince George, the principal officers and ladies of the Court, and Victory introducing the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene; France and Bavaria prostrate on the ground, amidst standards, arms, and trophies. The design was painted by Laguerre in oils, and Boit erected a furnace and workshops in Mayfair, and commenced operations. His difficulties retarded the work so long that before it was nearly completed Prince George, who had done most to encourage it, died. This put a stop to the work for some time, "during which happened the revolution at Court, extending itself even to Boit's work. Their Graces of Marlborough were to be displaced even in the enamel, and her Majesty ordered Boit to introduce Peace and Ormond instead of Victory and Churchill. These alterations were made in the sketch which had not been in the fire . . . Prince Eugene refused to sit. The Queen died. Boit ran into debt, his goods were seized by execution, and he fled to France; where he changed his religion, was countenanced by the Regent, obtained a pension of £280 per annum and an apartment, and was much admired in a country where they had seen no enameller since Petitot. . ."

Walpole also mentions one or two other plates of Boit's, amongst which was one at Kensington of a considerable size, representing Queen Anne sitting and Prince George standing by her.

Another interesting, though not particularly important artist, who settled in England in the latter years of the seventeenth century and lived to see the commencement of the eighteenth, was Marcellus Lauron—better known, so far as he can be said to be known at all, as Old Laroon, as he was father to another Marcellus of whom I shall have more to say presently. He was born at the Hague in 1653, and came to England early in life, and found employment under Kneller, for whom he painted the draperies of

A Pinch of Snuff. *From a pencil drawing by Marcellus Laroon. British Museum.*

his innumerable portraits. His claim to be mentioned in the present chapter rests on his designs for the seventy-four plates engraved by Tempest, and published in 1711, usually known as "Tempest's London Cries." As Laroon died in 1702—the day after King William—these figures barely come into our century; but they are near enough and certainly of sufficient interest to justify their inclusion, though not distinguished for any particular beauty or artistic force as engraved by Tempest. Of the seventy-four plates, about sixty are "Cries," the rest being characters. Of the "Cries," most are merely the minor commodities of everyday life, such as brooms, pots, baskets, and eatables, among which is a remarkable plenty of all sorts of fish; a few of them, however, are strange enough to be noticed, if only for the lilt of them—

Pretty maids, pretty pins, pretty women.
A bed mat or a door mat.
Lily white vinegar threepence a quart.
Twelve pence a peck oysters.
Old shoes for some brooms.
Hot baked wardens hot (Warden pears).
Colly Molly Puff (pastry).
Any old iron, take money for.
Buy a white line, a jack line, a clothes line.

Why some things should still be cried in the streets and others be only obtainable in shops would require a good deal of explanation; and that brings us to consider how much the everyday life of a subject of Queen Anne really differed from our own. A couple of centuries seems a long time, but it is not really so long as it sounds, and if any of us were suddenly asked what differences we thought there probably were between the social life of the Romans in 100 B.C., and in 100 A.D., we should probably say, none at all.

Some amusing descriptions of English society are given in the letters of a Swiss gentleman, Mons. César de Saussure, who visited England in 1725, and again a little later, which will enable us to test the truth of this. These have recently been published, in English, by Mr. John Murray, and, though of no particular importance in themselves, are well worth reading, if only to find how very little some of our ordinary manners and customs have changed

in a century and three-quarters. In fact, it has been questioned whether the letters are altogether genuine, and it is not difficult to see why; for one is often assailed by the suspicion that some modern Gulliver is slyly poking fun at his readers, in such passages, for instance, as the description of cricket:—"The English are very fond of a game called cricket. For this purpose they go into a large open field and knock a small ball about with a piece of wood. I will not attempt to describe the game to you; it is too complicated; but it requires agility and skill, and every one plays it, the common people and also men of rank. Sometimes one county plays against another county. The papers give notice of these meetings beforehand and, later, tell you which side has come off victorious. Spectators crowd to these games when they are important."

Translation has no doubt invested a description of this sort with a somewhat remarkable air of modernity, and there are other passages which, though doubtless genuine enough, seem to have been somewhat freely translated for modern readers. "The populace has other amusements, and very rude ones; such as throwing dead dogs and cats and mud at passers-by on certain festival days. Another amusement which is very inconvenient to passers-by is football. For this game a leather ball filled with air is used, and is kicked about with the feet. In cold weather you sometimes see a score of rascals in the streets kicking at a ball, and they will break panes of glass and smash the windows of coaches, and also knock you down without the slightest compunction; on the contrary, they will roar with laughter."

The fact of the matter is that the character of a nation is not seriously modified by altered conditions and what are called improvements in the social life. Superficially, of course, the modification is proportionate to the improvement, and the institution of the police force alone has entirely changed the condition of the streets during the last century or so. But were the police disbanded to-morrow, the next day would find the old conditions obtaining. A London house of half a century ago was in every way the same as those built in the reign of Queen Anne, and even the invention of iron girders, telephones, and bath-rooms has hardly altered them now—

except when they are flats. But let us hear a little more from De Saussure.

The path, he observes of the Mall, is every spring bestrewn with tiny sea-shells which are then crushed by means of a heavy roller. Society comes to walk here on fine warm days from seven to ten in the evening, and in winter from one to three o'clock. English men and women are fond of walking, and the park is so crowded at times that you cannot help touching your neighbour. Some people come to see, some to be seen, and others to seek their fortunes. In those days the Thames was also a favourite resort, and De Saussure is amused at the conversations there on fine summer evenings; for it is the custom, he tells, for any one on the water to call out whatever he pleases to other occupants of boats, even were it to the King himself, and no one has a right to be shocked. Dr. Johnson, we know, availed himself of this privilege when assailed by the waterman, and De Saussure gives a curious instance of how a Queen might be maligned by the vulgar, even in those days, when the august Anne was often called "Brandy-bottle," on account of a supposed weakness for spirits. He also noted that amusing but now quite forgotten floating pleasure resort called *The Folly*, which was a large boat moored near Somerset House, in which there was a band of musicians, playing to water nymphs who ate and drank with Tritons and other sea divinities who went to visit them.

The sanctuary of fashion, however, seems to have been what De Saussure calls "The Ring," in Hyde Park, which he describes as a round place two or three hundred feet in diameter, shut in by railings, and surrounded by fine trees. Here, on Sundays during the warm season, between five and six o'clock, the fine ladies and gentlemen came and drove slowly round in order to see and to be seen, there being sometimes as many as one or two hundred chariots. Of the fine ladies, and in fact of all English ladies, whether fine or not, the gallant visitor has a great deal to say, and I fancy that at least a fair proportion of my readers will consider it worth listening to.

"You are aware, I know," he writes, "that the women of this country are said to be beautiful, and I must own that it is the truth,

and they are so more especially in the country. Nothing can be more charming and attractive than these country girls. Their complexions are like lilies and roses; they have a look of health that entrances you; and their manners are artless, simple, and modest. . . . You do not see many beautiful women in London Society, and at Court I remarked only four or five who could pass muster. . . . Most English women are fair and have pink and white complexions, soft though not expressive eyes, and slim, pretty figures, of which they are very proud and take great care, for in the morning, as soon as they rise, they don a sort of bodice which encircles their waists tightly. Their shoulders and throats are generally fine. They are fond of ornaments, and old and young alike wear four or five patches, and always two large ones on the forehead. Few women curl or powder their hair, and they seldom wear ribbons, feathers, or flowers, but little headdresses of cambric or of magnificent lace on their pretty, well-kept hair. They pride themselves on their neatly shod feet, on their fine linen, and on their gowns, which are made according to the season either of rich silk or of cotton from the Indies. Very few women wear woollen gowns. Even servant maids wear silks on Sundays and holidays, when they are almost as well dressed as their mistresses. Gowns have enormous hoops, short and very wide sleeves, and it is the fashion to wear little mantles of scarlet or of black velvet and small hats of straw that are vastly becoming. Ladies even of the highest rank are thus attired when they go walking or to make a simple visit. English women and men are very clean; not a day passes by without their washing their hands, faces, necks and throats in cold water, and that in winter as well as in summer.

"I must now give you my experience of the character of English women. I find them gentle, frank, and artless, and they do not try to conceal their sentiments and passions. Generally speaking they are not coquettish, they do not simper affectedly, nor do they make a show of displeasing, bold airs. On the contrary their modest demeanour charms you, and they soon lose their timidity, and will banter with you. They are rather lazy, and few do any needlework, but spend their time eating or walking, and going to the play or assemblies, where games are played." English women are

tender-hearted (he further observes), and capable of great resolution to show their love, which is the cause of many ill-assorted marriages; but neither husbands nor wives in these cases are jealous.

That we should have to turn to books for all our ideas of what Society was in these days, without any sort of illustration to guide us except the portraits of its more noticeable units, is the more regrettable when we think of how much the old Dutch painters, for instance, have recorded of their everyday life. But it is comforting to reflect that of all the life-like characters depicted in these matchless Dutch pictures, there were hardly any who were sufficiently distinguished to excite any curiosity as to who they were or what they did, while in England the reign of Queen Anne was "so illustrated by heroes, poets, and authors," that there is something almost ungracious in even commenting on the non-existence of a school of painting.

"We are now arrived," says Walpole of George I.'s reign, "at the period in which the arts were sunk to the lowest ebb in Britain. . . . Sir Godfrey Kneller still lived, but only in name, which he prostituted by suffering the most wretched daubings of hired substitutes to pass for his works, while at most he gave himself the trouble of taking the likeness of the persons who sat to him. His bold and free manner was the sole admiration of his successors, who thought they had caught his style, when they neglected drawing, probability, and finishing. . . . The habits of the time were shrunk to awkward coats and waistcoats for the men; and for the women, to tight-laced gowns, round hoops, and half-a-dozen squeezed plaits of linen, to which dangled two unmeaning pendants, called lappets, not half covering the straight-drawn hair. . . . Linen, from what economy I know not, is seldom allowed in those portraits, even to the ladies, who lean carelessly on a bank, and play with a parrot they do not look at, under a tranquillity which ill accords with their seeming situation, the slightness of their vestment and the lankness of their hair having the appearance of their being just risen from the bath, and found none of their clothes to put on, but a loose gown."

Of the work of Charles Jervas, who, after Kneller, had the

greatest vogue as a portrait painter during the reign of George I., there is a fair example at the National Portrait Gallery—Catherine Hyde, the beautiful and witty Duchess of Queensberry; but the reader will possibly be more entertained by Walpole's amusing sketch of the artist than by the sight of any of his work. "Between the badness of the age's taste," he writes, "the dearth of good masters, and a fashionable reputation, Jervas sat at the top of his profession; and his own vanity thought no encomium disproportionate to his merit. Yet he was defective in drawing, colouring, composition, and even in that most necessary, and perhaps most easy talent of a portrait painter, likeness. In general his pictures are a light flimsy kind of fan-painting as large as the life. Yet I have seen a few of his works highly coloured; and it is certain that his copies of Carlo Maratti, whom most he studied and imitated, were extremely just, and scarce inferior to the originals. It is a well-known story of him that having succeeded happily in copying (he thought in surpassing) a picture of Titian, he looked at the one, then at the other, and then with parental complacency cried, 'Poor little Tit! how he would stare!' But what will recommend the name of Jervas to inquisitive posterity was his intimacy with Pope, whom he instructed to draw and paint . . . and who has enshrined the feeble talents of the painter in the lucid amber of his glowing lines. The repeated name of Lady Bridgwater in that epistle was not the sole effect of chance, of the lady's charms, or of the conveniency of her name to the measure of the verse. Jervas had ventured to look on that fair one with more than a painter's eye; so entirely did the lovely form possess his imagination, that many a homely dame was delighted to find her picture resemble Lady Bridgwater. Yet neither his presumption nor his passion could extinguish his self-love. One day, as she was sitting to him, he ran over the beauties of her face with rapture—'But,' said he, 'I cannot help telling your Ladyship that you have not a handsome ear.' 'No!' said Lady Bridgwater; 'pray, Mr. Jervas, what is a handsome ear?' He turned aside his cap and showed her his own . . . "

Swift's portrait had been painted by Jervas, which he appears to have rolled up and sent (or a copy of it) to "M. D.," as he tells

her to treat it carefully and not hang it over the back of a chair. It is regrettable that his long journal to Stella contains so little that is actually descriptive of the brilliant society he moved in; but the mere mention of dinners and assemblies and visits seems to have been enough for Stella, and we seldom get more than even a snapshot portrait of any of the characters. The following passages are perhaps worth quoting as relating to the matter in hand:—

"1712. *December* 19.—The Duchess of Ormond promised me her picture, and coming home to-night I found hers and the Duke's both in my chamber. Was not that a pretty civil surprise? Yes, and they are in fine gilded frames, too. I am writing a letter to thank her, which I will send to-morrow morning. I'll tell her she is such a prude that she will not let so much as her picture be alone in a room with *a man* unless the Duke's be with it; and so forth."

"1712–3. *February* 8.—Lady Orkney has given me her picture; a very fine original of Sir Godfrey Kneller's; it is now amending. He has favoured her squint admirably and you know how I love a cast in the eye."

"*February* 27.—Did I tell you that I have a very fine picture of Lady Orkney, an original, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, three-quarters length? I have it now with a fine frame. Lord Bolingbroke and Lady Masham have promised to sit for me; but I despair of Lord Treasurer; only I hope he will give me a copy, and then I shall have all the pictures of those I really love here; just half-a-dozen, only I'll make Lord Keeper give me his print in a frame."

"1713. *April* 11.—I dined at Lord Treasurer's with his Saturday company. We had ten at table, all lords but myself and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Argyle went off at six, and was in very indifferent humour as usual. Duke of Ormond and Lord Bolingbroke were absent. Lord Treasurer showed us a small picture, enamelled work, and set in gold, worth about twenty pounds; a picture, I mean of the Queen, which she gave to the Duchess of Marlborough, set in diamonds.

When the Duchess was leaving England, she took off all the diamonds and gave the picture to one Mrs. Higgins (an old intriguing woman, whom everybody knows), bidding her make the best of it she could. Lord Treasurer sent to Mrs. Higgins for the picture, and gave her a hundred pounds for it. Was ever such an ungrateful beast as the Duchess? Or did you ever hear such a story? I suppose the Whigs will not believe it. Pray, try them. Takes off the diamonds and gives away the picture, to an insignificant woman, as a thing of no consequence: and gives it her to sell like a piece of old-fashioned plate! Is she not a detestable slut?"

This picture of the Duke of Ormond occasioned an effusion from Matthew Prior that sounds hardly as complimentary to the artist as to his subject:—

> "Out from the injured canvas, Kneller, strike
> These lines too faint: the picture is not like.
> Exalt thy thought; and try thy toil again:
> Dreadful in arms on Landen's glorious plain
> Place Ormond's Duke: impendent in the air
> Let his keen sabre comet-like appear." &c.

Swift has several notes of picture auctions in his correspondence with Stella, that throw a little light on the sort of interest that was taken in art at this time. "I sauntered about this morning (2 January 1713), and went with Dr. Pratt to a picture auction, where I had like to be drawn in to buy a picture that I was fond of, but it seems was good for nothing. Pratt was there to buy some pictures for the Bishop of Clogher, who resolves to lay out ten pounds to furnish his house with curious pieces." On the 6th March next: "I was to-day at an auction of pictures with Pratt, and laid out two pound five shillings for a picture of Titian, and if it were a Titian it would be worth twice as many pounds. If I'm cheated, I'll part with it to Lord Masham; if it be a bargain I'll keep it to myself. That's my conscience. But I made Pratt buy several pictures for Lord Masham. Pratt is a great virtuoso that way." A couple of days later he laid out another fourteen shillings—whether on another Titian or not he does not say. Next day he was at another auction;

THE DUCHESS OF ORMOND. *From a mezzotint by John Smith after the painting by Kneller.*

"and a great auction it was. I made Lord Masham lay out forty pounds. There were pictures sold of twice as much value apiece." On the 25th March was another, where he met the Duke of Beaufort, and "the Bishop of Clogher has bought abundance of pictures, and Dr. Pratt has got him very good pennyworths."

But though we have only snapshots of the realities of Society in his journal to Stella, Swift has woven a wonderfully elaborate composition out of its idiosyncrasies, in the "complete collection of genteel and ingenious conversation according to the most polite mode and method now used at Court, and in the best companies of England, in three dialogues," usually known by the short title of "Polite Conversations." These dialogues are pretended to be the satirist's epitome of the smart sayings he has noted down in his large table-book during a long period of years, put into the mouths of a small party of smart people spending a day together, and, although written with the tongue far into the cheek, they betray an unmistakable air of being as near an impression of the truth of things as it is possible for any sort of fiction to be. Swift is of course ridiculing the use of set phrases by rote, *clichés*, as substitutes for original conversation, and there is a strange familiarity about much of the repartee which, if he may be taken seriously for once, was all at least a hundred years old in his day. He claims that he has passed perhaps more time than any other man of his age and country in visits and assemblies, where the polite persons of both sexes distinguish themselves, and that he could not without much grief observe how frequently both gentlemen and ladies were at a loss for questions, answers, replies, and rejoinder; that the conversation at Court, at public visiting days, and other places of general meeting, was often seen to fall and drop to nothing, like a fire without supply of fuel. Accordingly he devoted himself to classifying all the ingenious remarks he heard, and arranging them in the form of dialogues that might be an example for all to learn from.

The argument of the dialogues, which outlines the whole of a fashionable day's occupation, is as follows:—Lord Sparkish and Colonel Atwit meet in the morning upon the Mall; Mr. Neverout

joins them; they all go to breakfast at Lady Smart's. Their conversation over their tea, after which they part, but my Lord and the two gentlemen are invited to dinner. Sir John Linger (a Derbyshire squire) is likewise invited, but comes late. The whole conversation at dinner, after which the ladies retire to their tea. The conversation of the ladies without the men, who are supposed to stay and drink a bottle; but in some time go to the ladies and drink tea with them. The conversation there. After which a party at quadrille, until three in the morning; but no conversation set down. They all take leave and go home.

As for there being no conversation set down at cards, Swift confesses his disappointment that so universal and polite an entertainment had contributed so little to the enlargement of his work, as he had sat many hundred times with the utmost vigilance, and his table-book ready, without being able, in eight hours, to gather matter for so much as one single phrase. But to make up for this he has concentrated on the pert Miss Notable—evidently a very young and distracting lady—and Mr. Neverout, who seem to have kept the company fairly alive with their sparkling repartee, a great part of which might almost be overheard nowadays in suburban villas or in a Bank Holiday excursion train. Neverout asks her to fill him a dish of tea, and she asks if he will have it now or stay till he gets it. A second time he asks:—

Miss. Pray, let your betters be served before you; I'm just going to fill one for myself: and you know the parson always christens his own child first.

Nev. But I saw you fill one just now for the Colonel. Well, I find kissing goes by favour.

Miss. Pray, Mr. Neverout, what lady was that you were talking with in the side box last Tuesday?

Nev. Miss—Can you keep a secret?

Miss. Yes. I can.

Nev. Well, Miss—and so can I!

The Colonel and Lord Sparkish, too, have some pretty passages.

Col. But, my Lord, I forgot to ask you how you like my new clothes.

Lord S. Why, very well, Colonel; only, to deal plainly with you, methinks the worst piece is in the middle. (*Here a loud laugh, oft repeated.*) Pray, is Miss Buxom married? I hear 'tis all over the town.

Col. If she be'nt married, at least she's lustily promised. But is it certain that Sir John Blunderbuss is dead at last?

Lord S. Yes, or else he's sadly wronged, for they have buried him.

Nev. Pray, Miss, why do you sigh?

Miss. To make a fool ask, and you are the first.

Nev. Well. I see one fool makes many.

Miss. And you are the greatest fool of any.

The Colonel spills his tea, and his hostess cheers him with the remark that it is as well done as if she had done it herself. But it is useless to quote any more—it is all quotation, and the whole day's entertainment makes a very good afternoon's reading.

These "Polite Conversations" were not published till some years after the close of the period we are now considering, though perhaps we may take their author's word seriously enough to believe that he had been collecting material for them for many years past. But there is another satirical picture of Society at the close of George I.'s reign —shortly after the execution of Jonathan Wild—that took such an extraordinary hold on the public of all classes, and so influenced the art and literature of the succeeding decade or so, that, in spite of its subject being one of low life, it forms an important link between this chapter and the next—I mean "The Beggar's Opera." As this has not been performed now for nearly half a century, and as the present age is so taken up with what it is pleased to call "musical farce," it is perhaps worth calling to mind the outlines of this famous piece, that so roused the public interest in the humours of the criminal classes as exploited for satirical purposes.

Peachum is the thieves' lawyer, and his daughter Polly furnishes the first development of the plot by letting out that she is married to Captain Macheath, the highwayman. Peachum questions her, and con-

cludes by speaking his mind very plainly: "You know, Polly, I'm not against your toying and trifling with a customer in the way of business, or to get out a secret or so. But if I find out that you have play'd the fool and are married, you jade you, I'll cut your throat, hussy. Now you know my mind." Mrs. Peachum then bursts in—or out—"in a very great passion," with the following, set to the tune of "O London is a fine Town."

> "Our Polly is a sad slut! nor heeds what we have taught her;
> I wonder any man alive will ever rear a daughter!" &c.

"I knew she was always a proud slut," she continues, "and now the wench hath played the fool and married, because forsooth she would do like the gentry. Can you support the expence of a husband, hussy, in drinking and gaming? Have you money enough to carry on the daily quarrels of man and wife about who shall squander most? If you must be married, could you introduce nobody into our family but a highwayman? Why, thou foolish jade, thou wilt be as ill used and as much neglected as if thou hadst married a Lord!" Peachum comes to the rescue with some very sage reflections. "Let not your anger, my dear, break through the rules of decency, for the Captain looks upon himself in the military capacity as a gentleman by profession. Besides what he hath already, I know he is in a fair way of getting [making money] or of dying; and both these ways, let me tell you, are most excellent chances for a wife." Mrs. Peachum, however, is not so easily consoled. "With Polly's fortune," she says, "she might well have gone off to a person of distinction. Yes, that you might, you pouting slut! . . . All the hopes of the family are gone for ever and ever!" Polly, after a short ditty to the tune of "Grim King of the Ghosts," pathetically remarks, "I did not marry him (as 'tis the fashion) coolly and deliberately for honour or money. But, I love him." "Love him!" screams her mother, "worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred. Oh husband, husband! her folly makes me mad! My head swims! I'm distracted! I can't support myself . . . Oh!" (*Faints.*) The act closes with a charming love scene between Macheath and Polly, in which one of the ditties is, "Over the Hills

and far away," while another contains this simple yet captivating couplet:

"*Polly*. Fondly let me loll.
Macheath. O pretty, pretty Poll."

Several of these old tunes survived—and possibly still survive in old-fashioned houses—in "The Lancers"; as, for instance, "If the heart of a man is deprest by care," which was the regular music for the "Ladies in the middle" figure.

In the next act, Macheath is "lagged," and the unfortunate Lucy Lockit, the jailor's daughter, comes on the scene, with reproaches for Macheath's perfidy. Polly afterwards joins them, giving occasion to Macheath's ever remembered—

"How happy could I be with either
Were t' other dear charmer away!
But while you thus teaze me together,
To neither a word will I say,
But lol de rol," &c.,

which is shortly followed by Polly's "Cease your funning."

In the third act the plot thickens, as it should, and ditties to the tunes of "Happy Groves," "Of all the girls that are so smart," "Britons, strike home," "Chevy Chase," "Joy to great Cæsar," "Green Sleeves," and the like, follow in dazzling succession, till the curtain is rung down on "Lumps of Pudding." A chorus, consisting of a Beggar and a Player, then enter, and explain that poetical Justice must be done to make the piece perfect—"Macheath is to be hanged; and for the other personages of the drama, the audience must have supposed they were all either hanged or transported." But this was so fatal an objection that a general reprieve was ordered, and the conclusion of the whole matter was resolved thus by the Beggar—"Through the whole piece you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life that it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable vices) the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen. Had the play remained as at first intended, it would have carried a most excellent moral. 'Twould have shown that the lower sort of people have their vices in a degree as well as the rich, and that they are punished for them."

In the next chapter we shall see how this theme was worked out.

CHAPTER II

HOGARTH AND HIS TIMES

The extraordinary success of "The Beggar's Opera" seems almost, as I have already hinted, to have been the determining factor in the development of both art and literature during the next quarter of the century, a period that has somehow acquired the air of belonging almost exclusively to those two very brilliant but decidedly rough diamonds, Hogarth and Fielding. To pass from the age of *The Spectator* to the age of Reynolds is something like crossing the servants' quarters on one's way from the study to the drawing-room, and for the high-minded and fastidious the babble of loud and rather coarse voices is too much, and the general atmosphere too strong, to permit them to stay and make any acquaintance with the company whose quality and manners, it must be admitted, are hardly those of Sir Roger or Lord Chesterfield. That the passing-away of Addison and Steele—or, for the matter of that, the execution of Jonathan Wild—had any cataclysmal effect on the general tone of society, or that even its outward appearances underwent any considerable change at this particular time, need hardly be supposed; it is merely that the individuality of Hogarth and Fielding was strong enough to dominate their period, and their brilliance to eclipse the lesser lights, just as the gentler spirits of Addison, Steele, and Pope illuminated the preceding period with a glow that even a firebrand like Swift rarely outshone.

What Hogarth's career would have been but for his early success with "The Harlot's Progress," it is, of course, impossible to say; but, as it happened, that was the great turning point, and, before he was old or experienced enough to decide for himself whether he should remain an engraver of popular prints, or a painter of people's likenesses, decided for him that he was to be both, and a great deal

Marriage a la Mode. Shortly after Marriage. *By W. Hogarth. National Gallery. From a photograph by F. Hanfstaengl.*

more besides. The success of "The Harlot's Progress" was phenomenal. The familiarity of the subject (as Nichols observes), and the propriety of its execution made it tasted by all ranks of people, so that above twelve hundred names were entered in the subscription book. Cibber made a pantomime out of it, and somebody else a ballad opera, under the attractive title of "The Jew Decoyed." Its general popularity was increased by the fact, related by Nichols, that at a Board of Treasury held a day or two after the appearance of the third print, a copy of it was shown to one of the Lords as containing, among other excellences, a striking likeness of Sir John Gonson, the incomparable and learned magistrate who was so zealous and so eloquent in the suppression of this sort of iniquity. This gave universal satisfaction, and each Lord repaired from the Treasury to the print shop for a copy of it, and Hogarth rose completely into fame. Henceforth he was to be public moralist, an occupation which, if it did not dignify his art, ensured him at all events a great deal more attention than he would have ever attracted as a mere painter, whether of portraits or of subjects.

Whether we look at Hogarth as the founder of a school of painting, or, in connection with the subject in hand, as simply a painter of contemporary Society, it is impossible not to admire his extraordinary independence and originality It is amusing enough to know that he was the inventor of the thumb-nail sketch, as is certified by Nichols on the information of a friend of his, who actually saw Hogarth, "being once with our painter at the Bedford Coffee House, draw something with a pencil on his nail. On inquiring what had been his employment, he was shown the countenance (a whimsical one) of a person who was there at a small distance." But what is really worth considering is that, without any English precedents to work upon, he should have produced such surprisingly successful pictures of groups of figures engaged in action or conversation, while even more extraordinary is his brilliant idea of painting not one but a whole series of pictures, giving his characters life as only the theatre had done before him. Hogarth was always striking out on new tracks, and doing things that no one had done before. Even in his personal relations

with uncongenial sitters he anticipated the moderns, and the following epistle has hardly been surpassed by any professor of the "gentle art."

"Mr. Hogarth's dutiful respects to Lord ——; finding that he does not mean to have the picture which was drawn for him, is informed again of Mr. H.'s necessity for the money; if, therefore, his lordship does not send for the picture in three days it will be disposed of, with the addition of a tail, and some other little appendages, to Mr. Hare, the famous wild beast man; Mr. H. having given that gentleman a conditional promise of it for an exhibition picture, on his Lordship's refusal."

Hogarth was of course a realist, and it is fortunate that his reputation was established before he attempted Sigismunda. Had he begun with Sigismunda, and found a few noble noodles to crack him up as a classical painter, no one can tell how lamentable the result would have been. At any rate we should have lost the Hogarth we have now, and we can hardly be too thankful that Kate Hackabout and Mother Needham occupied so prominent a place in the public eye as to ensure for our blunt Englishman the recognition which in a more artificial age would have been denied him.

Of his sermons and satires, however, it is hardly necessary to say any more on this occasion, and we may turn at once to consider a minor and less familiar branch of his art, but one that is of special interest in relation to the society of his time, namely, the painting of "conversation pieces," as they were generally called. Instead of painting single portraits of different members of a family, he developed, if he did not originate, the fashion for depicting whole families not merely sitting in groups, but engaged in some natural occupation or "conversation"; and besides Hogarth there is only one artist who has left us any considerable quantity of them, namely Zoffany. Hogarth, in fact, was an observer of Society rather than of individuals, and his *forte* was in dealing with humanity in everyday expressions of itself rather than in penetrating the characteristics of any single member of it as a unit. To Hogarth men and women were merely atoms in a universe, and their relation one to another concerned him far more than to attempt the dissection of any particular atom. To Hogarth

THE WANSTEAD ASSEMBLY. *By W. Hogarth. South London Art Gallery.*

the canvas was a stage on which men and women must speak and act, and not sit mute and motionless. To him a picture was the means of expressing some phase of life, not the mere rendering in paint of the likeness of a man; and even in a single portrait, like that of John Broughton, his independence and originality carry him far away from his contemporaries. Here is a full-length portrait, but instead of Mr. Broughton being posed, in his best get-up, against a pillar, he is boldly taken walking at you, in undress, his stick raised in one hand, his hat in the other, notwithstanding he has no wig to cover his bare head. It is quite impudent, and quite successful. That Hogarth could equal his contemporaries in a more conventional portrait—it is hardly fair to compare his work with that of his more accomplished successors—is quite clear from such a picture as that of Lord Lovat, which as a soliloquy, on a bare stage without any setting, is as eloquent as any scene in his "Progresses." There sits the old fox!

It is not every one, however, who has as much in his face as old Simon Fraser, and there is no doubt that a family group of ordinary people is a more satisfactory way of expressing the life, if it can be decently done, than a series of single portraits. The thing is so obvious that it hardly needs talking about; but yet when we come to look at the attempts that are occasionally made nowadays, what use do we find made of it? With the exception of Mr. Sargent, there is hardly a painter of modern times who can put half as much life and expression into a group of figures as may be seen in any of Hogarth's. The family are all in their best clothes, and look thoroughly strained and uncomfortable. They are seldom doing anything, except sitting for their portraits, and on the whole the photographer can produce just as good a result with a camera and a few persuasive words to each of his sitters in turn. This was not Hogarth's way. If he had a family to paint, he made them for the time being his own: he ordered them about, or, if he didn't, he knew exactly how to get them into their proper relations with one another without orders: if it was not composition, it was at least arrangement, and when it was not that, it was simply genius.

Take, for instance, the picture of the Strode Family, which is now at the National Gallery, which Nichols calls a "Breakfast Piece." Here,

on a small canvas, are portraits of William Strode, of Northaw in Hertfordshire; his mother, Lady Anne, who was sister to Lord Salisbury, Colonel Strode, and Dr. Arthur Smith, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin. There are also two dogs, one of which, says Nichols, was Mr. Strode's, and the other (a pug) the Colonel's. Another group is that of the Woollaston Family, painted in 1730, which was lately exhibited by Messrs. D. & P. Colnaghi, but without their being at liberty to inform me whom it belonged to. Here there are two tables in a large room, one for tea and another for cards, and at each are grouped four or five figures, while the principal gentleman is standing talking between the two.

But even more successful than these, and, as any of my readers who may recall the Exhibition of National Portraits in 1867 will probably agree, considerably more charming, is the picture of the Western family of Rivenhall, which Hogarth probably painted in 1735. In this, too, the scene is an interior, and the principal piece of furniture a tea-table—or it may be a "breakfast" table, slightly to one side. In the centre is Mr. Western, a tall big man, who has evidently just entered the room and is standing, with a lady on his right side, holding in his left hand a dead partridge. Behind the tea-table is standing another lady, of very sparkling mien, who with a lively gesture plucks the gown of the chaplain, Mr. Hartell (who is sitting to her left talking to a man-servant), to call his attention to the bird, leaving the tea-things (and this is the prettiest touch) to the attention of a little wee girl, who is standing nearest to us, in front of the table, and is just tall enough to be peeping over the edge of it.[1] After this, the picture of Sir Andrew Fountaine and his family seems a little flat, though it can hardly be considered inferior. The scene is a garden, and the motive is the display of a picture, which is held upright by Cocks the auctioneer, while it is examined closely by Sir Andrew and another man, two seated ladies regarding it from a distance. A smaller group, and one which compares in treatment with that of "Hogarth's Servants" at the National Gallery, is the four figures, of three-quarter-length,

[1] Nichols describes another group of the Western family which includes Hoadly and others.

Gustavus Viscount Boyne. *From the painting by Hogarth.* *Viscount Boyne.*

The Duke of Montagu's Wedding. *From the painting by Marcellus Laroon*

of the Misses Weston, of Stallbridge in Dorsetshire. Here the effect is obtained by the characterisation of the faces of the four girls, there being little opportunity of grouping, and Hogarth shows himself equally capable. The faces are full of life, and considerably more character than is often seen in the faces of a group of sisters.

As a picture, however, by far the most vivid and impressive is the extraordinary portrait of Lord Boyne in the cabin of his yacht. It is thoroughly characteristic of Hogarth that he should paint a Peer as no one before or since has ever done; that he should spurn the idea of coronet or robes, or of any state and pomp, and present his Lordship seated in a cabin, in undress, his hands resting on a stick, one leg crossed over the other, and his bare feet in slippers. Instead of making his maiden speech in the House, or driving Envy and Fraud from the councils of the nation, or doing any other of those things actual or allegorical which Peers are so fond of being found doing, Lord Boyne is paying the most natural attention to the skipper, who is showing him a chart; and we have here, for once, a portrait in which we may learn something of the subject from the actual surroundings in which the painter saw him. The picture is skilfully composed; the cabin is somewhat dark, but the light, striking from our left, catches the broad sheets of the chart, which is in the centre, and enough of the terrestrial globe across the room on our right to relieve a dark corner. A large round table occupies the centre of the cabin, Lord Boyne being seated in front of it, and the skipper reaching across it from behind, and there is room on it for a good-sized punchbowl (besides the charts), from which one of the two standing figures on our left has taken a cupful. Behind the skipper, on our right, is a fifth figure, with a short stick, which is said to be a likeness of the artist. Under the table is seen a very Hogarthian cat.

But Hogarth must not be allowed to monopolise this chapter. He has had ample justice done him of late, both by Sir Walter Armstrong and Mr. Austin Dobson, and there are some of his contemporaries who are well worth becoming acquainted with, even if their voices are not so loud, nor their talents so dominating. Much as we admire Mr. Hogarth and his outspoken exposition of the

morals of his time, we should like to know a little more of its manners; and though we esteem him as the salt of the earth—that portion of it in particular which men were getting prouder and prouder of calling England—there is no reason why we should not be looking about for a little of the sugar. What we want is to make friends with a few of his contemporaries, brother artists, who will convince us in their own way that there is still something worth discovering in the work of this period besides Hogarth's, and that the population of these islands in his time (outside the charming family circles he depicted) was not entirely composed of thieves and blackguards.

Certainly there are others besides Hogarth, whose known work though not perhaps of first-rate importance is charming enough to make us hope that sooner or later a great deal more of it may be brought to light from the odd corners of old country houses, and may show us that there is really something worth staying to look at in the way of pictures in the passage from the Augustan age to Sir Joshua and his circle. To begin with, there is Sir Joshua's master, Hudson, though there is no need to say very much of his work on the present occasion, as his occupation was chiefly that of the conventional portrait painter, to whom people sat as a matter of course without feeling any of the thrill of being made a picture of by a great artist. He was the son-in-law of Jonathan Richardson, and successor to him and the fatuous Jervas as the fashionable portrait painter of his time, and I think I am right in saying that he did little besides single portraits. Vanloo, as Walpole observes, and Liotard, for a few years diverted the torrent of fashion from the established professor, but the county gentlemen were faithful to their compatriot, and were content with his honest similitudes and with the fair tied wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which he liberally bestowed on his customers, and which with complaisance they beheld multiplied in Faber's mezzotintos. The better taste introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds (Walpole continues) put an end to Hudson's reign, who had the good sense to resign the throne soon after finishing his capital work, the family piece of Charles, Duke of Marlborough.

THE ENRAGED HUSBAND. *From a drawing by Joseph Highmore. British Museum.*

Joseph Highmore, who was bred for a lawyer, but studied painting with some success, is a more promising subject, as he is said to have devoted himself particularly to family groups. Unfortunately his works are so little known that I am unable to lay hands on any example of a painting of this sort which is accessible for reproduction in this volume; but the single drawing which the British Museum contains of his, goes some way to atone for the deficiency. This drawing, "The Enraged Husband," as it is called, is the slightest of pencil sketches, but it shows such force and such delicacy alike that one hardly regrets that it was carried no further. There is enough in its few strokes to convey with the most charming ease and certainty not only the nature of the scene at which we are onlookers, but the characters who are enacting it; and the artist seems to have accomplished quite as much with his delicate pencil point as Hogarth with his bludgeon. One feels that the shape and hang of the lady's hoop and her easy contemptuous attitude as she feels in her purse, have quite as much to do with her lord's exasperation as the state of the clock at which he is pointing, while the yawning maids and the huddling footmen, dimly outlined as they are, are far more useful in completing the effect than any of Hogarth's inanimate symbols and labels that he filled up his backgrounds with.

Besides family pieces, however, Highmore is known to have painted a series of pictures illustrating scenes from "Pamela," which were engraved by L. Truchy and A. Benoist, and published on the 1st July 1745. What has become of the pictures I have no idea, but the engravings, of which two are here reproduced, are enough to show that it would be well worth anybody's while to find them. It is so easy to believe that things are lost or destroyed merely because nobody one asks happens to know where they are, that I have the greatest hopes that this charming series is somewhere under our noses all the time, perhaps in the safe keeping of some trusty custodians whose last care about the treasures they are put to guard is that the public should see them. The Chardin pictures at Glasgow, for instance, which were shown at Whitechapel last Spring, were so entirely unknown, that I was fortunate enough to pick up an unnamed mezzotint of the largest of them for no more than three

francs in Paris the other day. The Soane Museum is open occasionally, and is sometimes visited by people from a distance who happen to strike the particular month, day, and hour of its being open. Pending their discovery, however, it is only fair to Highmore to reproduce a couple of the series in a work of this sort, and to quote the descriptions of them which are probably from his pen:—

"Pamela on her knees before her father, whom she had discovered behind the door, having overturned the card-table in her way. Sir Simon Darnford, his lady, &c., observing her with eagerness and admiration. Mr. B., struck with this scene, is waiting the issue.

"Pamela with her children and Miss Goodwin, to whom she is telling her nursery tales. This last piece leaves her in full possession of the peaceable fruits of her virtue long after having surmounted all the difficulties it has been exposed to."

No less interesting is the work of Francis Hayman, of which a good deal was engraved by Grignon and others. In his pictures, says Walpole, his colouring was raw, nor in any light did he attain excellence. But that his work was distinguishable by the large noses and shambling legs of his figures is a criticism for which Walpole may well be called to task, if Hayman is to be judged by the engravings after his Vauxhall pictures and his illustrations to Pope, Milton, and other editions of his period. These Vauxhall pictures, which were engraved by Grignon, Parr, Truchy, and others, and published in 1743, are a most charming and lively series, and afford us a very amusing view of the diversions of the homely classes at that time. These include Battledore and Shittlecock, Leapfrog, See-Saw, Stealing a Kiss, Quadrille (not the dance but a game of cards), The Fortune-Teller, Blind Man's Buff, and Building Houses with Cards; and in most of them the personages are all graceful and attractive, especially the children in their quaint habits, while the grouping is admirable.

Another of these Vauxhall pictures was the allegorical piece in commemoration of Hawke's victory in Quiberon Bay, in which a diversity of nymphs are swimming round a chariot, each holding

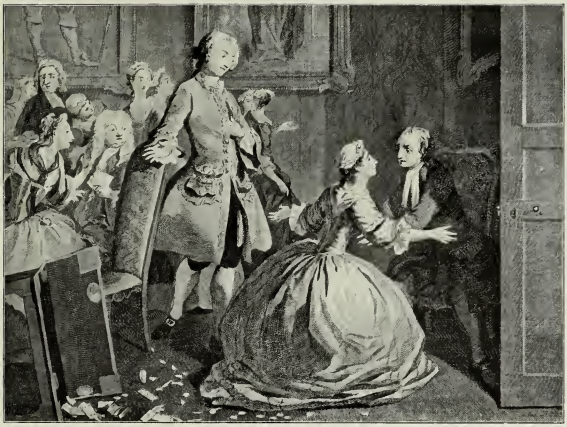

ILLUSTRATION TO "PAMELA." *From an engraving by Benoist after the painting by Joseph Highmore.*

ILLUSTRATION TO "PAMELA." *From an engraving by L. Truchy after the painting by Joseph Highmore.*

a medallion bearing the portrait of an Admiral. The nymphs are amusingly Hogarthian in feature, though in costume they are of an earlier epoch—that of Eve—and the naval heroes' countenances on the medallion make an effective contrast. It was this picture that occasioned the scene in "Evelina," where (at a later date than we are now speaking of) Mr. Smith, an art critic of a type that is by no means extinct in these present days, was so beautifully "smoked." Evelina relates how, to escape the importunities of Sir Clement, she turns towards one of the paintings, and, pretending to be very much occupied in looking at it, asks M. des Bois some questions concerning the figures.

"O! Mon Dieu!" cried Madame Duval, "don't ask him; your best way is to ask Mr. Smith, for he's been here the oftenest. Come, Mr. Smith, I daresay you can tell us all about them."

"Why, yes, Ma'am, yes!" said Mr. Smith, who, brightening up at the application, advanced toward us with an air of assumed importance, which, however, sat very uneasily upon him, and begged to know what he should explain first: "for I have attended," said he, "to all these paintings, and know everything in them perfectly well, for I am rather fond of pictures, Ma'am; and really I must say, I think a pretty picture is a—a very—is really a very—is something very pretty——"

"So do I too," said Madame Duval; "but pray now, Sir, tell us who that is meant for," pointing to a figure of Neptune.

"That! Why, that, Ma'am, is—Lord bless me, I can't think how I come to be so stupid, but really I have forgot his name;—and yet—I know it as well as my own too;—however he's a *General*, Ma'am, they are all Generals."

I saw Sir Clement bite his lip; and, indeed, so did I mine.

"Well," said Madame Duval, "it's the oddest dress for a General ever I see!"

"He seems so capital a figure," said Sir Clement to Mr. Smith, "that I'm sure he must be the Generalissimo of the whole army."

"Yes, sir, yes," answered Mr. Smith, respectfully bowing, and highly delighted at being thus referred to, "you are perfectly right;

—but I cannot for my life think of his name;—perhaps, Sir, you may remember it?"

"No, really," replied Sir Clement, "my acquaintance among the generals is not so extensive."

For over two centuries Vauxhall was London's most popular place of recreation, and its history from the time it was visited by Pepys, until in 1869 it made way for the Railway Station where tickets are taken, would fill a very large volume. In Mr. Wroth's recent book on "The Pleasure Gardens of London," there is only room for one short chapter upon it, so numerous were the gardens and wells all round London, whose names only now survive in some cases, while others are completely forgotten. Hockley-in-the-Hole and Baggnigge Wells were places of great resort, but how many inhabitants of London to-day could place them on the map?—while Islington and Marylebone have grown into such important parts of the metropolis that the idea of Pleasure Gardens has fled far from them. The last survival of this sort of place was Cremorne, which, after a chequered, though on the whole successful career of about half a century, was finally closed in 1875.

It was in 1742 that Vauxhall at last had a serious rival—Lord Ranelagh's grounds adjoining the Royal Hospital being turned into a place of public amusement. "Two nights ago," writes Walpole on the 26th May, "Ranelagh Gardens were opened at Chelsea; the Prince, Princess, Duke, and much nobility, and much mob besides, were there. There is a vast amphitheatre [better known as the Rotunda] finely gilt, painted, and illuminated, into which everybody that loves eating, drinking, staring, or crowding, is admitted for twelvepence. The building and disposition of the gardens cost sixteen thousand pounds. Twice a week there are to be ridottos, at guinea-tickets, for which you are to have a supper and music. I was there last night [he adds] but did not find the joy of it. Vauxhall is a little better; for the garden is pleasanter and one goes by water."

Ranelagh, indeed, was a less joyous place than Vauxhall, even if it was occasionally more fashionable. Its chief attraction was the Rotunda, which gave it a more formal character than that of the

VAUXHALL. *From an engraving after T. Rowlandson. G. Harland Peck, Esq.*

secluded alleys and *al fresco* suppers of Vauxhall. At Ranelagh there was only tea and bread and butter, and the chief amusement, such as it was, was to promenade round and round the Rotunda. But there were great occasions, and perhaps the greatest of these was the Venetian Fête in 1749, an illustration of which is in existence. This print, which bears the name of Boitard, a spirited artist and engraver who contributed not a few examples of contemporary manners that are catalogued among the "Satirical Prints," is accompanied by a good deal of letterpress that is hardly in keeping with Boitard's representation of what was undoubtedly a most brilliant and successful entertainment. It is possible that those interested in Vauxhall may have had something to do with its publication, and intended to discredit these foreign innovations by pretending to be shocked at the Royal sanction being given to so frivolous an undertaking. If so, they should have chosen a less sympathetic draughtsman than Boitard, who has certainly been carried along by the lively crowd he depicts. With their poet they were more fortunate, for the satirical title, "By the King's Command," is followed by a dozen couplets or so that might have been written by a disappointed non-conformist who had not only had his pocket picked, but also lost his umbrella :—

> "England, most fond of foreign follies grown,
> Each new device adopts and makes her own:
> France cannot fast enough supply the call,
> From Venice they import the Fresco ball,
> Where nymphs in loose and antick robes appear,
> And motley shapes our warlike heroes wear."—

And so forth. But the entertainment was so successful that another was given on the 24th May 1751, being the Prince of Wales' birthday, and this was depicted by Canaletto.

It was in 1749, as it happens, that London was first honoured by the attentions of Antonio Canaletto, "the perspective painter of Venice," as Vertue calls him in noting his arrival at this date. Vauxhall, as will be seen from our illustration, was likewise honoured, and Vertue makes the following interesting note about another of his London subjects :—

"It may be supposed that his shyness of showing his works

doing or done he has been told of, and therefore probably he put this advertisement in the public newspaper:—Signor Canaletto hereby invites any gentlemen that will be pleased to come to his house to see a picture done by him, being a view of St. James' Park, which he hopes may in some measure deserve their approbation, any morning or afternoon at his lodgings [at] Mr Wiggan, cabinet-maker in Silver street, Golden square."

Boitard's print of the Venetian Masquerade is the more interesting inasmuch as the event which it depicts is minutely described by Walpole, who gives a very different view of it from that of the publishers of the print. Peace had been proclaimed on the 25th April 1749, "and on the next day," Walpole writes, "was what was called a Jubilee Masquerade in the Venetian manner, at Ranelagh; it had nothing Venetian in it, but was by far the best understood and prettiest spectacle I ever saw; nothing in a fairy tale even surpassed it. One of the proprietors, who is a German, and belongs to the Court, had got my Lady Yarmouth to persuade the King to order it. It began at three o'clock, and about five people of fashion began to go. When you entered you found the whole garden filled with masks and spread with tents, which remained all night *very commodely*. In one quarter was a Maypole dressed with garlands and people dancing round it to a tabor and pipe and rustic music, all masqued, as were all the various bands of music that were disposed in different parts of the garden; some like huntsmen with French horns, some like peasants, and a troop of harlequins and scaramouches in the little open temple on the mount. On the Canal was a sort of gondola adorned with flags and streamers, and filled with music, rowing about. All round the outside of the amphitheatre were shops filled with Dresden china, Japan, &c., and all the shopkeepers in mask. The amphitheatre was illuminated, and in the middle was a circular bower, composed of all kinds of firs in tubs, from twenty to thirty feet high: under them orange trees with small lamps in each orange, and below them all sorts of the finest auriculas in pots; and festoons of natural flowers hanging from tree to tree. . . . There were booths for tea and wine, gaming tables and dancing, and about two thousand persons. In short it pleased me more than anything I ever saw."

TASTE A LA MODE, 1745 *From an engraving after Boitard.*

Masquerade at Ranelagh Gardens, April 26, 1749. *From an engraving after Boitard.*

Of the private Court life under George II. an amusing if grim sketch is given in a letter of Lord Hervey's to Lady Sundon, which is quoted by Thackeray in "The Four Georges." "I will not trouble you," he writes, "with any account of our occupations at Hampton Court. No mill-horse ever went in a more constant track, or a more unchanging circle; so that by the assistance of an almanack for the day of the week, and a watch for the hour of the day, you may inform yourself fully, without any other intelligence but your memory, of every transaction within the verge of the Court. Walking, chaises, levees, and audiences fill the morning. At night the King plays at commerce and backgammon, and the Queen at quadrille, where poor Lady Charlotte runs her usual nightly gauntlet, the Queen pulling her hood, and the Princess Royal rapping her knuckles. The Duke of Grafton takes his nightly opiate of lottery, and sleeps as usual between the Princess Amelia and Caroline. Lord Grantham strolls from one room to another (as Dryden says) like some discontented ghost that oft appears, and is forbid to speak, and stirs himself about as people stir a fire, not with any design, but in hopes to make it burn brisker. At last the King gets up; the pool finishes; and everybody has their dismission. Their Majesties retire to Lady Charlotte and my Lord Lifford; my Lord Grantham to Lady Frances and Mr. Clark; some to supper, some to bed; and thus the evening and the morning make the day."

Besides the three English artists, Hogarth, Highmore, and Hayman, to whom we are indebted for so much of our knowledge of what people looked like and what they did, there are several foreigners who have also contributed a great deal that is worth thanking them for, and whose names will perhaps be better known when this particular period in the history of the English school of painting comes to be a more fashionable study than it is at the present moment, when the examples which are here reproduced are practically all that are procurable. Boitard we have already mentioned in connection with Ranelagh, and he has given us lively pictures of the men and women of his time in a couple of prints called "Taste à la Mode," in 1735 and 1745; but he was rather a broad-sheet satirist than anything more considerable. Of the painters, Marcellus

Laroon the younger may first be mentioned, and he should perhaps be included among the Englishmen, being born and bred in England, though of course of foreign extraction. He was the son of "Old Laroon" mentioned in my first chapter, and was born near London in 1679. He began life as an actor, and he also served as a soldier, and obtained a commission, whence he is known as Captain Laroon. What has become of all his work it is impossible to say, but there is doubtless a good deal of it somewhere if it could only be found. A couple of drawings at the British Museum, and one or two in private collections are all that I have ever seen of it myself, besides the two pictures at Kensington Palace, and I have searched in vain for the present whereabouts of the larger picture of the "Duke of Montagu's Wedding," which is here reproduced. That an artist who could paint pictures like these should be so entirely forgotten seems almost impossible, not that they are in any sense masterpieces, but they show that Laroon was not only entrusted with important work of this sort, but was very capable of executing it.

So far as I can ascertain, there is no history of the last-named picture beyond what was stated about it in the Catalogue of National Portraits, to the effect that it depicted the marriage of Lord Cardigan and Lady Mary Montagu, and that the bride and bridegroom are the figures talking to the parson near the door. This of itself would date the picture as having been painted in 1730, or thereabouts, as the wedding in question took place in July of that year. On the other hand Laroon was more or less engaged in active service till 1734, and there is the drawing by him reproduced opposite this page, which can hardly be dissociated from the picture; and that is inscribed "Marcellus Laroon fecit 1736," while underneath it is the following: "A Concert, by Captain Laroon. The gentleman on the left under the door is John, Duke of Montague; the lady standing by him is his daughter Mary, Countess of Cardigan, afterwards Duchess of Montague." This is of course a considerably later inscription, as Cardigan was not created Duke of Montagu till 1776, about which time Gainsborough painted him and his Duchess, making an even more wonderfully attractive picture of the elderly lady than of many a younger

Concert at Montagu House. *From a drawing by Marcellus Laroon. British Museum.*

beauty. In Laroon's picture are traceable three or four points that connect it with the drawing, such as the violoncello case in the foreground of either, the portraits of Lady Cardigan and her father, and the lady with the fan, who is evidently the same in both the drawing and the picture. In both it is quite obvious that all the figures are portraits, and that the subject is an actual scene in one or other of the rooms in Montagu House.

There is a further point to be considered, however, and that is the similarity of this picture and the drawing to one of the two pictures at Kensington, which is called "Royal Assembly in Kew Palace." This is stated in the catalogue to be dated 1740; but it is evidently another version of the wedding group, and is in fact closer to the drawing than the picture last described. There are variations, to be sure, but not of sufficient importance to allow of the slightest doubt that the scene is the same, and its appellation of a Royal assembly at Kew must yield to the inscription on the drawing. The other Kensington picture, which was formerly at Hampton Court, was for some time attributed to Vanderbank, and it is still catalogued as a Royal group, the person at the head of the table being said to be the Prince of Wales. But I cannot help thinking that here again we have something connected with the Montagu Wedding, especially as in an old catalogue the picture has been described as the marriage of the Duke of Wharton. Certainly a ducal coronet is discernible on the iron gate seen through an open window, but that either of the meteoric Wharton's two romantic weddings (one in the Fleet, and the other at Madrid) is here the subject is hardly possible.

Hubert François Gravelot was another Frenchman who worked for some time in England during the 'forties, though he is not known to have painted any pictures. Walpole only mentions him in his "Catalogue of Engravers," though be begins by saying that he was not much known as an engraver, but was an excellent draughtsman. A glance at the specimens of his work here reproduced is enough to confirm the latter part of this statement; and, though there is not very much either of his drawing or engraving extant, the few examples there are, both at the British Museum and in the National Art

Library at South Kensington, are well worth hunting up. The illustrations to "Pamela," of which five of the drawings are at the British Museum, are widely different from those of Highmore, and it is perhaps hardly fair to the latter to compare them, as Gravelot's are finely drawn with a sharp pen on a very small scale, while Highmore's were oil paintings, of which we only know the engravings of Truchy, who was no great engraver, and Benoist, who, if he was rather better, was hardly of the first order. But the comparison is worth making if only to show what an English artist could do at that date when virtually in competition with a Frenchman; and though Gravelot's work must be ranked by so many degrees the higher, that of Highmore has a greater value to us as being of our own school, and bringing home to us the life of the time with a sincerity that has certainly a charm of its own. Gravelot's "Ladies and Gentlemen on a Terrace," again, with all its delicate charm, is hardly English, and the voice of conscience tells me it is more likely that it represents a French scene than an English one; but the composition is so entirely charming that I feel sure an indulgence will be granted, and England be given the benefit of the doubt.

Another foreigner who painted portraits in England was John Baptist Vanloo, a brother of Carl Vanloo, whose "Halte à la Chasse" in the Louvre eclipses most of the illustrations of Society we have in England. Even John Baptist, as Walpole observes, soon bore away the chief business of London from every other painter, and had his visit not been so short (1737–1742) there can be no doubt that he would have acquired a much greater fame in this country. As it is, his work is but little known. There is a portrait of his of Augusta, Princess of Wales, holding the young George III. by the hand, at Buckingham Palace; but a more charming, if less important, specimen is the half-length of Peg Woffington in the Jones Collection at South Kensington. Why it should now be labelled as by an unknown artist when it was exhibited with the National Portraits in 1867 as Vanloo, was perhaps known to Mr. Jones, or to the Museum authorities; but whether it be his or not, it is certainly an exceedingly delightful picture, and the treatment of the hands, in particular, is far more delicate than anything

TWO ILLUSTRATIONS TO "PAMELA." *From drawings by H. F. Gravelot. British Museum.*

that might be expected from most of the English painters of the period.

What Vanloo might have done for English patrons may be judged from what his countryman Philip Mercier did—though even of Mercier's work, during a sojourn of over forty years in England, it is difficult to enumerate more than a bare percentage. That Mercier has not left a deeper mark on his time is due rather to his own weakness than to any want of opportunity, for he came to England under the wing of Royalty, and was never in want of patronage. His work, however, is not of the strongest character; in fact its principal charm is a sort of childishness; and, delightful as many of his pieces are, they are not of a quality to command the admiration that, at the same time, they are quite capable of winning.

Mercier was appointed principal painter and librarian to the Prince and Princess of Wales at their independent establishment in Leicester Fields, and while he was in favour he painted various portraits of the Royalties, and no doubt many of the nobility and gentry, which are awaiting re-discovery when the fashion for the name of Mercier sets in. Of the Royal portraits, those of the Prince of Wales and of his three sisters, painted in 1728, were all engraved in mezzotint by Simon, and that of the three elder children of the Prince of Wales by the younger Faber in 1744. This last was a typical piece of Mercier's composition, the children being made the subject of a spirited, if somewhat childish, allegory in their game of play. Prince George is represented with a firelock on his shoulder, teaching a dog his drill, while his little brother and sister are equally occupied in a scene which is aptly used to point a patriotic moral embodied in some verses subjoined to the plate, of which the concluding couplet is as follows:—

> "Illustrious Isle where either sex displays
> Such early omens of their future praise!"

Faber also engraved six plates of "Rural Life" after Mercier, and several other subjects of his have survived him, and show that possibly he did not make the fullest use of his Royal patronage.

Be that as it may, he lost favour, and it is probable that it was shortly after this that he left London and settled in York; where he practised portrait painting for over ten years, before returning to London again. In Yorkshire houses there must be many of his portraits painted at this time. Vertue mentions that he "had much imployments of Nobility and Gentry and substantial persons, whose portraits he drew, being well paid for them," before returning to London in October 1751. At Hovingham Hall, for instance, there are three juvenile portraits, painted in 1742, of the daughters of Thomas Worsley, in whose account-book is the following entry on the 31st July in that year—"Paid Mr. Mercier for three pictures, viz., of my daughters Betty, Kitty, and Nancy, at whole length, £21." Lord Malmesbury's portrait of Handel is a very life-like and natural picture of Mercier's, said to have been painted in or about 1748. In 1752 Vertue records that Mercier went to Portugal at the request of several English merchants. He did not long remain there, however, but came back to London, where he died in 1760.

That Mercier's name should not figure in the Catalogue of our National Gallery is hardly surprising, but it is worth mentioning, perhaps, that one of his subject pictures has recently been acquired for the Louvre. This is a small piece called "Le Dégustateur," a half-length of a boy seated beside a wine cask, a full glass uplifted to the light in his right hand, and a flask in his left. In treatment, though hardly in technique, it anticipates Chardin, and it will be interesting to see whether Mercier's name is catalogued with the English or the French School. Certainly the bulk of his work was done in England, and even before his appointment to the Royal Household, he was painting English portraits. A view of the terrace of Shotover House, near Oxford, was recently sold out of the collection of Dr. Briscoe of Holton Park, which contained portraits of Baron and Lady Schutz, Dr. Tessier, Mrs. Blunt, the daughter of Sir Timothy Tyrrell, Mrs. Bensoin, Colonel Schutz, and Count Betmere. This was painted by Mercier in 1725. Another family group is that at Belton, of Viscount Tyrconnel and his family in a garden, and Mercier himself sketching them. Neither of these pictures,

A Family Party. *From a drawing by Philip Mercier. British Museum.*

THE ELIOT FAMILY. *By Sir Joshua Reynolds. From a water-colour in the possession of G. Harland Peck.*

however, is accessible to public view, and as a painter of conversation pieces Mercier has still to be "discovered." If time, fashion, or accident will bring to light a few examples of the sort of picture sketched in the accompanying drawing, we shall have reason to be grateful to this Frenchman, if only for showing us that the fancy portrait I ventured to draw of the Court of Queen Anne might very possibly have been painted in fact. We have become so used to thinking of our ancestors in terms of conventional family portraits, that we can hardly imagine them engaging in less prosaic pursuits than politics or war. But what is to be said of a group like this, where a country gentleman and his party are actually depicted at a concert in the garden? If it is not Marlborough with a lute, it is at least a squire, and possibly a nobleman, with a violoncello; and, for all we know, this delightful party may be composed of some of the very stiffest and starchiest of Georgian Society as we know it from less romantic records. As a matter of fact, the notorious pompousness of the English is not even skin deep—it goes no deeper than their decorations, or at most than their clothes; and as a record of what Society actually was, a sketch of this sort is worth a hundred ancestral portraits.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF REYNOLDS AND GAINSBOROUGH

The more one thinks of it the more extraordinary it seems that out of nothing should have sprung almost at the same moment two great painters, of such different methods, training, and surroundings; yet whose works (besides being the most wonderful that this country has ever produced) are in not a few instances so much alike that it requires a skilled judgment to decide whether they are by the one or the other. It is as though the Goddesses or Genii of East and West had wagered as to which could produce the greater artist, and that Suffolk and Devonshire were on their mettle. From Plympton came the ambitious Reynolds—ambitious, I mean, to learn and practise all that had been possible in painting, and more. From Sudbury, the natural, easy Gainsborough, who never travelled further than Bath, and who studied his landscapes from sticks and weeds. That both had a natural genius for painting need hardly be said—the Goddesses saw to that; but while Reynolds was ceaselessly studying from the old masters how to accomplish their excellences and to use them in discovering fresh ones of his own, Gainsborough was simply painting; and, even if we must accord Reynolds the higher place, we cannot help feeling that, of the two, Gainsborough is by far the more lovable, and that perhaps his coolness to Reynolds is not altogether inexplicable, if we imagine, as it is easy to do, that he read the high-flown Presidential discourses with a little impatience now and then. "All the indigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England," we may quote as an instance, "where art was at the lowest state it had ever been in (it could not indeed be lower), were to be totally done away with, and eradicated from my mind." It is true that this particular passage was not published in Gainsborough's lifetime, and that it refers to a period

when he was but twenty years old; but it is a good instance of Reynolds' view of his own and his country's art, which was no doubt expressed in some form or another whenever occasion allowed. Can we not sympathise with Gainsborough, who had learnt only from Hayman and Gravelot, and take pleasure in recalling that there was at all events enough art in England in 1761 to elicit the following stanzas from Roubiliac the sculptor, which were stuck up at the Spring Gardens exhibition of English paintings in that year.

"Prétendu connoiseur qui sur l'antique glose
Idolatrant le nom sans connoître la chose,
Vrai peste des beaux arts, sans goût sans Équité,
Quitez ce ton pedant, ce mépris affecté
Pour tout ce que le temps n'a pas encore gâté.

Ne peus-tu pas, en admirant
Les maitres de la Grèce et ceux de l'Italie,
Rendre justice également
À ceux qu'a nourris ta Patrie?

Vois ce Salon et tu perdras
Cette prévention injuste;
Et, bien étonné, conviendras
Qu'il ne faut pas qu'un Mécenas
Pour revoir le Siècle d'Auguste."

Can we not sympathise with Gainsborough in feeling a little resentment at having Italy perpetually rammed down his countrymen's throats, and at such passages in particular as that in the discourse on "the grand style"?—"As for the various departments of painting, which do not presume to make such high pretensions, they are many. None of them are without their merit, though none enter into competition with this universal presiding idea of the art" [this by-the-by from "The President"]. "The painters who have applied themselves more particularly to low and vulgar characters, and who express with precision the various shades of passion as they are exhibited by vulgar minds (such as we see in the works of Hogarth) deserve great praise; but as their genius has been employed on low and confined subjects, the praise which we give must be as limited as its object."

How true and how important! But also how exasperating. We know that Reynolds was, and alone was, qualified to discourse in this strain; but on the other hand Gainsborough was qualified, and alone qualified, to be independent of it; and interesting as it is to know, as Reynolds admitted to Malone, that he had Paul Veronese in view when painting the two groups of the Dilettante Society, we feel much more charmed with Gainsborough's method of showing his fair sitters into a room illumined with but a single ray of light, and engaging them in conversation until the moment arrived when he would shout at them, "Stop as you are!"

It seems to me that some feeling of this sort more easily explains Malone's account (which he had from Reynolds) of the relations between two such discuneate painters, than any question of professional rivalry or envy. "Soon after Gainsborough settled in London," says Malone, "Sir Joshua Reynolds thought himself bound in civility to pay him a visit. That painter, however (as our author told me), took not the least notice of him for several years; but at length called on him, and requested him to sit for his picture. Sir Joshua complied, and sat once to that artist, but being soon afterwards taken ill, he was obliged to go to Bath for his health. On his return to London perfectly restored, he sent Gainsborough word that he was returned, to which Gainsborough, who was extremely capricious, only replied that he was glad to hear that Sir Joshua Reynolds was well; and he never afterwards desired Sir Joshua to sit, nor had any other intercourse with him till Gainsborough was dying."

Each went his own way; the one to paint as many as one hundred and twenty portraits of the nobility and gentry in a single year, to frame his immortal discourses, and to send his sister out driving in his state coach; the other to thunder at the Academy when his portrait of Royalty was not hung as he desired it, and to dazzle the world with an inexplicable technique that drew from Quin the delightful criticism, related by Angelo, "Sometimes, Tom Gainsborough, the same picture from your rigmarole style appears to my optics the veriest daub, and then—the devil's in you—I think you a Vandyke."

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF 1787. *From an engraving by P. A. Martini after Ramberg.*

Still more extraordinary was Gainsborough's "mopping," as it was commonly called, when he employed all the kitchen crockery and a quantity of sponges in the composition of landscape sketches—a *meccanismo* which became so popular that even the Queen had lessons from him. That he was so favoured of Royalty to the exclusion of Reynolds, even Angelo cannot explain, only suggesting that Gainsborough's charming personality was the most probable cause. "When my father was in attendance at Buckingham House," he writes, "Gainsborough was busily engaged in painting separate portraits of the Royal children. He used to tell my father he was all but raving mad with ecstasy in beholding such a constellation of youthful beauty. Indeed he used sometimes to rattle away in so hyperbolical a strain upon the subject of his art, that any indifferent observer would have concluded the painter was beside his wits. 'Talk of the Greeks!' he would exclaim, 'the pale-faced, long-nosed, unmeaning-visaged ghosts! Look at the living, delectable carnations in this royal progeny. Talk of old Dame Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi!' (addressing himself to his own painted resemblance of the sons and daughter of his Royal employer). 'Sir, here you behold half a score of youthful divinities! Look on, ye Gods!' 'Hist,' my father would say, 'Mister Gainsborough! you will be overheard, and we shall both be sent to St. Luke's.' 'St. Luke's, sir,' replied the madcap, 'know ye not that I am a painter, *ergo* a son of St. Luke? Ha! ha! ha!'"

The arrival of two such great portrait painters so entirely upset the existing state of the arts in England, and raised the practice of portraiture to such an unexpected height, that it is a little difficult to decide how far our ideas of society are affected by the painters, and how far the painters were influenced by society, or whether, in fact, they had any effect upon each other at all. At first thought it seems almost as if these two creators had of themselves brought into existence an entirely new race of superintelligent characters, and, like Deucalion and Pyrrha, peopled these islands, that of late had seemed to be overrun by pickpockets and prostitutes, with a society of statesmen, wits, and beauties which but for them would never have come into existence. It was not merely that England was becoming

more civilised—she is doing that still; but that the genius of two of her children seems all of a sudden to have transformed the coarse English Society of Hogarth and Fielding into ranks of great personages, and to have given them such an everliving quality that their features and figures are still almost as familiar to us, and at least as inspiring to the imagination, as those of the men and women whom we point out to our country cousins to-day.

That there were any good portraits painted before Reynolds' "Admiral Keppel" ushered in the new epoch, is perhaps hardly as well known, or at least remembered, as that there was a superabundance of bad ones; for Reynolds, not content with eclipsing his predecessors, went so far as to stigmatise their period as one in which "art was at the lowest state it had ever been in, it could not be lower." Nevertheless there were some very capable men at work in painting portraits, whose work would be much more appreciated if it were more studied. Philip Mercier I have already mentioned. George Knapton, besides being an able painter, is noted by Vertue for being "the most skilful judge or connoisseur in pictures," on which account he was appointed by the Prince of Wales keeper of the pictures at Kensington Palace. "At several times seeing Mr. Knapton at his house," wrote Vertue in 1750 (Add. MS. 23074, fol. 72), I observed his great improvement in oil painting—particularly a large family piece of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford and their children in one picture. Also another family piece of a gentleman, his lady and child, well drawn, disposed, and well coloured and painted, which pieces no doubt will do him much credit." At Althorp is a portrait group painted by him in 1745 of the Hon. John Spencer, with dog and gun, and his son, the first Earl Spencer, and a black servant, which is not at all a bad example of what a family picture ought to be. Hudson's portraits, too, are by no means as negligible as his pupil's performances have conspired with other circumstances to make them, and besides the goodly number of painters whose names are more or less familiar, there were doubtless many of sterling merit of whom we know nothing, such as the following note, extracted by Vertue from the *Daily Advertiser* in 1751, seems to refer to:—

"Andreas Mustard, limner in enamel and miniature; come to London—learnt of Rosalba in Venice: has drawn pictures of Nobles, Princes, and Kings; his price for enamelling, ten guineas: for limning, five guineas: in crayons, two guineas."

But Reynolds' most serious rival at this early period was Ramsay, of whose pictures Vertue observes in the same year that they were "much superior in merit than other portrait painters—his men's pictures strong likenesses, firm in drawing, and true flesh colouring, natural tinctures: his ladies delicate and genteel—easy free likenesses—their habits and dresses well disposed and airy. His flesh tints under his silks and satins, &c., shining beautiful and clear with great variety; his portraits generally very like; rather a true imitation of nature than any mannerist."

Walpole's letter to Sir David Dalrymple in 1759 is a very useful note at this critical moment. He mentions Ramsay the painter as the writer of certain anonymous pieces, and continues: "In his own walk he has great merit. He and Mr. Reynolds are the favourite painters, and two of the very best we ever had. Indeed the number of good has been very small considering the number there are. A very few years ago there were computed two thousand portrait painters in London; I do not exaggerate the computation, but diminish it, though I think it must have been exaggerated."

But still more surprising is what follows:—

"Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Ramsay can scarce be rivals; their manners are so different. The former is bold, and has a kind of tempestuous colouring, yet with dignity and grace; the latter is all delicacy. Mr. Reynolds seldom succeeds in women, Mr. Ramsay is formed to paint them."

This, however, was long before the enchanting picture of Nelly O'Brien was painted, and before the end of 1761 Walpole had so far modified his seemingly extraordinary opinion as to mention "a pretty whole-length of Lady Elizabeth Keppel in the bridesmaid's habit, sacrificing to Hymen"; but this is only put in as *à propos* of the preceding sentence: "Did you see the charming picture Reynolds painted for me of him (Hon. Richard Edgecumbe), Selwyn, and

Gilly Williams? It is by far one of the best things he has executed."

This is one of the few "conversation pieces" that were painted by Reynolds, the great bulk of his work being of course single portraits. Family groups, even, are rare, which is a matter for the keenest regret, when we see how perfect a master of composition his studies in Italy had helped to make him. One of his earliest pictures, painted in 1746, is that of the Eliot family, at Port Eliot, St. Germans, which is here reproduced from a small water-colour belonging to Mr. G. Harland Peck. In 1777, Sir Joshua seems to have reverted somewhat to groups, for there are no less than four that belong to this year or the next. First there is the pair of large portrait groups of the Dilettante Society (now at the Grafton Gallery), the club for which, said Walpole, the nominal qualification was having been in Italy, and the real one being drunk. Then there is the Bedford family group, in which the Duke is represented as St. George in the act of combat with the dragon, while Miss Vernon is Sabrina, and Lords John and William fill up the landscape. But the most important of all is the superb Marlborough picture, in which there are no less than eight figures—to say nothing of the dogs—which Ticozzi is not far wrong in naming as *il suo capo d'opera*.

If there is not very much of Sir Joshua's work that illustrates the manners and actions of people, there is still less of Gainsborough's; and of what there is, one cannot help feeling that Sir Walter Armstrong's criticism is very true. "In such complex matters as groups of many figures," he writes, "Gainsborough was never successful in hitting upon a quite satisfactory conception. The Baillie family in the National Gallery is a collection of beautiful passages, it is not a picture. In a less degree we may say the same thing of the Marsham family, of the eldest Princesses, and even of such comparatively simple things as the Sussex group, or the Eliza and Tom Linley. In each of these, separate ideas were suggested by the different figures, and the painter was defective in the faculty required for seducing them into a real intimacy . . . The only striking exceptions to this are afforded by those few cases in which his portraits become so far subject pictures as to suggest

THE ELIOT FAMILY. *By Sir Joshua Reynolds. From a water-colour in the possession of G. Horland Peck.*

an independent title, like 'The Morning Walk.' . . ." This last sentence must certainly be taken to include the beautiful picture of "Ladies Walking in the Mall," belonging to Sir Audley Neeld, which is perhaps the very finest example there is of a picture of English Society. But, save for exceptions of this sort, it is not the actual works of Reynolds and Gainsborough so much as their example and the effect they had on the art of their time that concern us, and we may begin to look round and see who else there was who has depicted Society in one form or another.

George Romney, who is certainly nearer, and that by many degrees, to Reynolds and Gainsborough than any one of his time, or since, has succeeded in getting, appears to have started his career by painting composition pieces as well as the portraits of his Westmoreland neighbours; and Cunningham mentions that he exhibited about a score of these in the Town Hall at Kendal, and disposed of them by lottery. Most of these had disappeared long before Cunningham's time, and young Romney relates how he and his father discovered one of them at Barfield in 1798, when they were looking over a house with a view to taking it, and thus describes it: "It represents a party consisting of three gentlemen and two ladies going on board a boat on a lake. The ladies show great timidity, so natural to the female character under the impression of danger, which expression is frequently accompanied by a certain degree of grace; but are politely urged by their attendant gallants. The colouring is beautifully clear and as fresh as if recently painted. The execution evinces great facility and freedom of handling, and the touches are spirited and neat."

That we have no more of such compositions and but few family pieces of Romney's, is perhaps accounted for by another incident related by Cunningham, namely, a visit from Garrick in the year 1768, or thereabouts, when Romney had been painting the Leigh family in a group, which he exhibited at the Free Society of Artists in that year. Cumberland had persuaded Garrick to visit Romney, who, before his tour to Italy, found London none too sympathetic, and was sadly in need of encouragement. Whether Garrick's pleasantry was ill or well intentioned it may not be possible to determine,

but it certainly appears to have been the latter, or we can hardly imagine how a North countryman would have suffered such intolerable impertinence from a stranger, however illustrious. A large family piece, says Cunningham, unluckily arrested his attention—a gentleman in a close buckled bob-wig and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, with his wife and children (some sitting, some standing), had taken possession of some yards of canvas, very much, as it appeared, to their own satisfaction—for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or action. Upon this unfortunate group, when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the attitude of the gentleman, and turning to Mr. Romney, "Upon my word, sir," said he, "this is a very regular well-ordered family, and that is a very bright rubbed mahogany table at which that motherly good lady is sitting; and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is doubtless a very excellent subject (to the State, I mean, if these are all his children), but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success which I hope will attend you." The modest artist, Cunningham adds, took the hint as it was meant, in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall. One cannot help wishing David Garrick anywhere but in Romney's studio after hearing this, for there is no doubt that Romney had a very good feeling for grouping figures, and indeed one of his first portraits done in London, that gave him a great vogue, was that of Sir George Warren and his lady, and their little girl caressing a bullfinch, which, says Cunningham, was so full of nature and tenderness that all who saw it went away admiring, and spread praise of the artist far and near.

The picture of the Gower children, again, painted in 1777, is a charming example of his success in groups of figures; four or five studies for this, in sepia, were once in my possession, all of them differing considerably, and showing what pains he was at, and how successful they were, in the arrangement of a family picture. Another group painted at about the same time is that of the Beaumont family; and in 1795 he executed two most important groups, one of the Bosanquet family, in which there are six full-length figures, and the famous Egremont picture at Petworth.

Author Reading from a Manuscript to Four Ladies. *From a Water-colour Drawing by M. Haughton. Randall Davies, F.S.A.*

Before we pass on to some of the minor artists of this period, let us glance for a moment at one or two notes by contemporary writers that may help to show us how the times were moving. Walpole is of course the most entertaining authority for this, even more than for other periods of the century, and for a terse outline of the annual course of Society in 1763, we may turn to a letter of his to Lord Hertford. "We are a very absurd nation," he writes, "but then that absurdity depends upon the almanac. Posterity, who will know nothing of our intervals, will conclude that this age was a succession of events. I could tell them [the French] that we know as well when an event as when Easter will happen. Do but recollect this last ten years. The beginning of October one is certain that everybody will be at Newmarket, and the Duke of Cumberland will lose and Shafto will win two or three thousand pounds. After that, while people are preparing to come to town for the winter, the Ministry is suddenly changed, and all the world comes to learn how it happened, a fortnight sooner than they intended; and fully persuaded that the new arrangement cannot last a month. The Parliament opens; everybody is bribed; and the new establishment is perceived to be composed of adamant. November passes with two or three self-murders, and a new play. Christmas arrives; everybody goes out of town; and a riot happens in one of the theatres. The Parliament meets again . . . balls and assemblies begin; some master and miss get together, are talked of, and give occasion to forty more matches being invented. . . . Ranelagh opens, and Vauxhall; one produces scandal, and t'other a drunken quarrel. People separate, some to Tunbridge and some to all the horse races in England; and so the year comes again to October."

In a letter to Montagu in the following year he is a little more particular. "If you like to know the state of the town," he says, "here it is. In the first place it is very empty (this was on the 16th December), and in the next there are more diversions than the week will hold. A charming Italian Opera, with no dances and no company, at least on Tuesdays; to satisfy which defect the subscribers are to have a ball and a supper—a plan that in my humble opinion will fill the Tuesdays and empty the Saturdays.

At both playhouses are woful English Operas; which, however, fill better than the Italian, patriotism being entirely confined to our ears; how long the sages of the law will leave us these I cannot say. . . . Well, but there are more joys; a dinner and assembly every Monday at the Austrian Minister's; ditto on Thursdays at the Spaniard's; ditto on Wednesdays and Sundays at the French Ambassador's, besides Madame de Welderen's on Wednesdays, Lady Harrington's Sundays, and occasional private mobs at my Lady Northumberland's. Then for the mornings there are levees and drawing-rooms without end, not to mention the Macaroni Club, which has quite absorbed Arthur's, for you know old fools will be after young ones."

Another of Walpole's letters to the sympathetic George Montagu contains an enlightening little passage on country town society, when he was being elected as member of Parliament for the borough of King's Lynn in 1761. "Think of me," he writes, "the subject of a mob, who was scarce ever before in a mob, addressing them in the Town Hall, riding at the head of two thousand people through such a town as Lynn, dining with about two hundred of them amid bumpers, hurras, soup and tobacco, and finishing with country dancing at a ball and sixpenny whisk! I have borne it all cheerfully; nay, have sat hours in *conversation*, the thing upon earth that I hate; have been to hear misses play on the harpsichord, and to see an alderman's copies of Rubens and Carlo Marat. Yet to do the folks justice they are sensible, and reasonable and civilised; their very language is (become) polished since I (last) lived among them. I attribute this to their frequent intercourse with the world and the capital, by the help of good roads and postchaises which, if they have abridged the King's dominions, have at least tamed his subjects."

In 1769 Vauxhall was still in high fashion, and Walpole gives a vivid picture of a *Ridotto al fresco* there at the beginning of May. "Mr. Conway and I set out from his house at eight o'clock; the tide and torrent of coaches was so prodigious that it was half-an-hour after nine before we got half-way from Westminster Bridge. We then alighted; and after scrambling under the bellies of horses,

GREENWICH HILL. *From a print dated* 1761. *Crace Collection, British Museum.*

through wheels and over posts and rails, we reached the gardens, where were already many thousand persons. Nothing diverted me but a man in Turk's dress and two nymphs in masquerade without masques, who sailed among the company, and, which was surprising, seemed to surprise nobody. It had been given out that people were desired to come in fancied dress without masks. We walked twice round, and were rejoiced to come away, though with the same difficulties as at our entrance, for we found three strings of coaches all along the road who did not move half a foot in half an hour. There is to be a rival mob in the same way at Ranelagh to-morrow, for the greater the folly and imposition the greater is the crowd."

Of the private or domestic occupations of society it is more difficult to find either descriptions or illustrations; but there is a charming little picture by Goldsmith, framed in the form of a letter from a young lady, a leader of fashion in 1760 or thereabouts, that is certainly worth quoting:—

"As I live, my dear Charlotte, I believe the Colonel will carry it at last; he is a most irresistible fellow, that's flat. So well dressed, so neat, so sprightly, and plays about one so agreeably, that I vow he has as much spirits as the Marquis of Monkeyman's Italian greyhound. I first saw him at Ranelagh; he shines there; he is nothing without Ranelagh, and Ranelagh nothing without him. The next day he sent a card and compliments, desiring to wait on mamma and me to the music subscription. He looked all the time with such irresistible impudence, that positively he had something in his face gave me as much pleasure as a pair-royal of naturals in my own hand. He waited on mamma and me the next morning to know how we got home; you must know the insidious devil makes love to us both. Rap went the footman at the door; bounce went my heart; I thought he would have rattled the house down. Chariot drove up to the window with his footmen in the prettiest liveries; he has infinite taste, that's flat. Mamma had spent all the morning at her head; but for my part, I was in an undress to receive him; quite easy, mind that; no way

disturbed at his approach; mamma pretended to be as *dégagé* as I, and yet I saw her blush in spite of her. Positively he is a most killing devil! He did nothing but laugh all the time he staid with us; I never heard so very many good things before; at first he mistook mamma for my sister, at which she laughed: then he mistook my natural complexion for paint, at which I laughed: and then he showed us a picture in the lid of his snuff-box, at which we all laughed. He plays picquet so very ill, and is so very fond of cards, and loses with such a grace, that positively he has won me; I have got a cool hundred, but have lost my heart. I need not tell you that he is only a colonel of train bands. I am, dear Charlotte, Your's for ever, BELINDA."[1]

The feminine passion for gaming, of which a faint recurrence occasionally flutters society even in modern times, was a constant subject for satirical pen and pencil in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries — Hogarth's little picture of "The Lady's Last Stake" is an instance; and Goldsmith's Chinese friend, Lien Chi Atlangi, has another rap at the English ladies under cover of applauding their moderation as compared with the excesses of the Chinese. After mentioning an instance of one of his countrywomen staking her clothes, her teeth, and her glass eye — all of which, it would appear, were delivered over on the nail — and that of the Spaniard who, when all his money was gone, endeavoured to borrow more by offering to pawn his whiskers, he pays this delicate tribute to the English ladies:—

"How happy, my friend, are the English ladies who never rise to such an inordinance of passion! Though the sex here are naturally fond of games of chance, and are taught to manage games of skill from their infancy, yet they never pursue ill-fortune with such amazing intrepidity. Indeed, I may entirely acquit them of ever playing—I mean playing for their eyes or their teeth. It is true they often stake their fortune, their beauty, health, and reputations at a gaming table. It even sometimes happens that

[1] "Citizen of the World," vol. i. No. xxxix.

CHILDREN OF THOMAS MILWARD. *From the painting by J. Russell.*

they play their husbands into a jail; yet still they preserve a decorum unknown to our wives and daughters of China. I have been present at a rout in this country where a woman of fashion, after losing her money, has sat writhing in all the agonies of bad luck; and yet, after all, never once attempted to strip a single petticoat, or cover the board, as her last stake, with her head-clothes."

Hogarth, whose career by-the-bye extended as far into this period as 1765, left a very tolerable disciple in the person of John Collett. Whether Collett was actually a pupil of Hogarth's or not, I do not know; but he was certainly an imitator, and has not only left us a good many single prints designed in Hogarth's manner, but even a series, which bears the alluring title of "Modern Love." This series consists of four prints, which were engraved by J. Goldar and published in 1782, the pictures no doubt being painted considerably earlier. The first is "Courtship," where the foreground is occupied by a very sentimental young lady who is presumably an heiress, and an impassioned lover who is doubtless impecunious. The parents, unobserved, are watching the interview in consternation. Plate 2 is styled "The Elopement," which has less interest than the third, "The Honeymoon." Plate 4, "Discordant Matrimony," is the best of all, and is so naturally composed that it may fairly be taken as an example of what a domestic interior actually looked like at that date, putting aside of course the Hogarthian letterpress that is printed on every available space to point the moral.

Of the single prints, "High Life Below Stairs" is one of the most successful, published in 1772. Another is "The Cotillion Dance," published in 1771, in which are eight figures of dancers, besides one or two spectators, and the musicians in a gallery. Another is a village scene, "The Vicar going to Dinner with the Esquire," engraved by T. Stayner in 1768, as is also "The Recruiting Sergeant," engraved by Goldar in the year following. In all of these there is humour enough to enliven them, without their being coarse or burlesque, and it is much to be regretted that none of the original pictures are in our public galleries. That any of them are still in existence, may, of course, be doubted; but my

own opinion is that if once the fashion set in for this class of picture, there would be countless examples sent up to Christie's for sale which are now hanging in obscure corners of country houses, or standing face to the walls in the lumber rooms of provincial dealers. An outcry is sometimes raised against the Trustees of the National Gallery for their inability to give thousands and tens of thousands for great and famous pictures, which in past years might have been purchased for a tenth of the money now asked for them; but they might much more reasonably be urged to consider the advisability of the nation now securing, by a little judicious industry and less money, a few examples of the early British painters whose names are not yet well enough known or regarded to inflate the prices of their work irrespective of its merit or its value in the history of English painting. To show how feasible this is, it is only necessary to turn to the British Museum, to whose Department of Prints and Drawings we are indebted for almost all that is known of any but the first rank of our earlier artists. Mr. Laurence Binyon's catalogue of English drawings is a revelation to any beginner in the study of this country's art, and, though the collection is far from complete, the most watchful eye is ever open to secure any desirable additions at a reasonable price.

While Collett's work carries us back to the old school of Hogarth, it is time to look forward to the newer art that under the (then) quickening influence of the Royal Academy was springing up and showing itself everywhere. A suitable instance for closing this chapter is that of John Raphael Smith, whose work, though it principally belongs to the last quarter of the century, has preserved at least one very precious relic of the second quarter in his delicious sketch of the Promenade at Carlisle House.

John Raphael Smith is so well known as an engraver, that his charm as a draughtsman has been rather eclipsed by the popularity of his mezzotints after Sir Joshua and others of the great painters, and even this delightful scene at Carlisle House is probably more familiar to the public from the prints of it in the shop windows than from the drawing itself, which is hung in the water-colour galleries at the South Kensington Museum. His original work is

THE BOOK SHOP. *From a drawing by J. Raphael Smith. British Museum.*

TWO GENTLEMEN. *From a drawing by Zoffany. Victoria and Albert Museum.*

lamentably scarce, and we may well wish that he had devoted less time to engraving and more to drawing.

Carlisle House stood at the corner of Sutton Street, on the east side of Soho Square. It was kept by Mrs. Cornelys, whom Walpole indirectly stigmatises as the ugliest woman of her day by describing Heidegger as her male counterpart. "On Wednesday evenings," wrote the eighteen-year-old Fanny Burney in her diary, "we went to Mrs. Cornelys' with Papa and Miss Nancy Pascall. The magnificence of the rooms, splendour of the illuminations and embellishment, and the brilliant appearance of the company exceeded anything I ever before saw. The apartments were so crowded we had scarce room to move, which was quite disagreeable; nevertheless, the flight of apartments both upstairs and on the ground floor seemed endless . . the rooms were so full and hot that nobody attempted to dance."

It was in 1760 that Mrs. Cornelys—who had appeared in England as an opera singer in 1746—first took Carlisle House, which, under her auspices, was during the next dozen years the scene of some of the most brilliant assemblies that have ever been recorded. Casanova mentions that she had sometimes as many as six hundred people in her saloon at one time at two guineas a head, and even the institution of Almack's, in 1764, seems not to have affected her success to any appreciable extent. "Mrs. Cornelys," writes Walpole in this year, "apprehending the future assembly at Almack's, has enlarged her vast room, and hung it with blue satin, and another with yellow satin; but Almack's room, which is to be ninety feet long, proposes to swallow up both hers, as easily as Moses' rod gobbled down those of the magicians." Mrs. Cornelys, however, replied with an expenditure of a couple of thousand pounds in the year following on furniture and embellishments, including "the most curious, singular, and superb ceiling to one of the rooms that was ever executed or even thought of," an outlay which was amply justified by her future successes. In April 1768, for instance, the following is recorded in the *Daily Advertiser*:—

> "On Thursday last there was a remarkably brilliant Assembly at Mrs. Cornelys' in Soho Square. There were present (besides

some of the Royal Family) many of the foreign ministry and first nobility, the Prince of Monaco, and two or three of the principal gentlemen in his Serene Highness' train. The Prince seemed astonished at the profusion of state, elegance, and expense displayed throughout the house, and declared his perfect approbation of the Assembly, as by far exceeding the highest of his expectations, or what he could possibly have conceived of any place of entertainment of that nature."

In the following August the King of Denmark honoured Mrs. Cornelys' with a visit, and next year were added a new room for the dancing of Cotillons and Allemandes, and a suite of new rooms adjoining. In February 1770, one of the most brilliant masquerades of all was held, of which the following account in the papers is printed in Mr. Clinch's most interesting edition of Dr. Rimbault's MSS., with many other details of the history of this remarkable though now totally forgotten house:—

"Monday night, the principal nobility and gentry of this kingdom, to the number of near eight hundred, were present at the masked ball at Mrs. Cornelys' in Soho Square, given by the gentlemen of the Tuesday Night's Club, held at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall. Soho Square and the adjacent streets were lined with thousands of people, whose curiosity led them to get a sight of the persons going to the masquerade; nor was any coach or chair suffered to pass unreviewed, the windows being obliged to be let down, and lights held up to display the figures to more advantage. At nine o'clock the doors of the house were opened, and from that time for about three or four hours the company continued to pour into the assembly. At twelve the lower rooms were opened; in these were prepared the sideboards, containing sweetmeats and a cold collation, in which elegance was more conspicuous than profusion. . . . The richness and brilliancy of the dresses were almost beyond imagination; nor did any assembly ever exhibit a collection of more elegant and beautiful female figures. Among

CARLISLE HOUSE.
From a Drawing in Chalks by J. Raphael Smith.
Victoria and Albert Museum.

them were Lady Waldegrave, Lady Pembroke, the Duchess of Hamilton, Mrs. Crewe, Mrs. Hodges, Lady Almeria Carpenter, &c. Some of the most remarkable figures were a Highlander (Mr. R. Conway); a double man, half miller, half chimney-sweeper (Sir R. Phillips); a Political Bedlamite, run mad for Wilkes and Liberty and No. 45; a figure of Adam in flesh-coloured silk, with an apron of fig-leaves; a Druid (Sir W. W. Wynne); a figure of Somebody; a figure of Nobody; a running Footman, very richly dressed, with a cap set with diamonds, and the words, "Tuesday Night's Club" in the front (the Earl of Carlisle); His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester in the old English habit, with a star on the cloak; Midas (Mr. James, the Painter); Miss Monckton, daughter to Lord Galloway, appeared in the character of an Indian Sultana, in a robe of cloth of gold and a rich veil. The seams of her habit were embroidered with precious stones, and she had a magnificent cluster of diamonds on her head; the jewels she wore were valued at £30,000. The Duke of Devonshire was very fine, but in no particular character. Captain Nugent, of the Guards, in the character of Mungo, greatly diverted the company. The Countess Dowager of Waldegrave wore a dress richly trimmed with beads and pearls, in the character of Jane Shore. Her Grace of Ancaster claimed the attention of all the company in the dress of Mandane. The Countess of Pomfret, in the character of a Greek Sultana, and the two Miss Fredericks, who accompanied her as Greek slaves, made a complete group. The Duchess of Bolton in the character of Diana, was captivating. Lord Edg—b, in the character of an Old Woman, was full as lovely as his lady in that of a Nun. Lady Stanhope, as Melpomene, was a striking fine figure; Lady Augusta Stuart as a Vestal, and Lady Caroline as a Fille de Patmos, showed that true elegance may be expressed without gold and diamonds. The Chimney-sweeper, Quack Doctor, and a Friar acquitted themselves with much entertainment to the company."

Within the next two years, however, Mrs. Cornelys' successful career was checked, and at the instigation of envious rivals she was

prosecuted and fined. For another dozen years or more the house fitfully broke into splendour again, but with nothing of its former lustre, and it was at last demolished in 1788. Smith's engraving was published in 1781, but it is probable that the drawing was made somewhat earlier, though not as early as the really splendid period of this extraordinary resort of fashion.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLOSE OF THE CENTURY

Roughly speaking, our four chapters coincide with the four quarters of the century. The reigns of Anne and George I., as it happened, not only in themselves marked off the first quarter, to within a couple of years, but were fully accomplished before there was any sign of the quickening influence, or atmosphere, of Hogarth. But as Hogarth was alive and active beyond the middle of the second quarter, and his career fits in more nearly with the reign of George II., so Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, to mention no others, who distinguished the third quarter, were still working well on into the fourth. By this time, however, the practice no less than the knowledge of art was so widely extended, that whereas for the beginning of the century one searched in vain for adequate examples to illustrate our subject, it has now become rather a matter of embarrassment what to choose out of such a multitude of charming, if not always very classical, specimens as may be seen in almost any shop window. Invention and industry had so multiplied the opportunities of intercourse, and accumulated such wealth for the nation, that art could not fail to find encouragement of a much more practical kind than the mere patronage of Royalty and a few of the nobility. For engraving the print, for instance, of Copley's excellent though by no means popular picture, "The Death of Chatham," Bartolozzi had no less than £2000; while more than double the number of subscribers were entered for it than for the sensational "Harlot's Progress" of Hogarth. England had never been so rich, and the loss of the American Colonies, so far from ruining England, seems to have been the starting point of her present progress. "She rose from it," as Green observes, "stronger and greater than ever, and the next ten years saw a display of industrial activity such as the

world had never witnessed before. During the twenty years which followed she wrestled almost single-handed against the energy of the French Revolution as well as against the colossal force of Napoleonic tyranny, and came out of the one struggle unconquered and out of the other a conqueror."

Society, in the meantime, went on much as it usually does when great events are stirring, and, whether or not the pen was mightier than the sword, the brush at this time was quite as busy as the cannon; while Nelson was fitting himself for a national monument in Trafalgar Square, the fascinating Emma was no less readily engaged in being commemorated in records of a more perishable but quite as popular a quality, while of all the men who contributed to England's marvellous advancement at this period there are hardly more than one or two who are not, probably, better known by their portraits than for their achievements. Reynolds and Gainsborough had, in fact, created such a demand for good pictures that others had to supply it, and had set such an example that others had to follow it, so that while these two names are still the foremost during the greater part of the last quarter of the century, it is rather to some of the stars of the lesser magnitudes that our remaining pages should be devoted. Of these not a few have been made so familiar to the public of late years through the enterprise of the fashionable dealers, that the term "star" may seem to fit them in its theatrical rather than its celestial sense, and it is really rather difficult to say anything about them that is not common knowledge. Downman, for instance, whose delightful profiles are being raked out of every corner in England to be scrambled for at Christie's; Cosway, Beechey, Plimer, Wheatley, Morland, Russell, and Raeburn, too, are names that the mere mention of is enough to rally all Bond Street; and even Lawrence has fetched his thousands, and Hoppner his tens of thousands. All of these were, in one sense or another, painters of Society, and most, if not all of them, very good ones too; while among the caricaturists are Gilray, Bunbury, and Rowlandson, whose collective works would of themselves tell us volumes about the Society of their time. But these are by no means the only ones, and there is still a great deal of talent that is waiting for fuller recognition.

A Windy Day. *From a water-colour drawing by R. Dighton. Victoria and Albert Museum.*

First, let us make our compliments to a lady who, besides penning a thousand descriptions of Society as she found it at the beginning of this last quarter of the century, might almost be supposed from the following eulogy to have painted at least one picture of it: "Thank you, my dear Fanny," writes Daddy Crisp to Miss Burney, "for your conversation piece at Sir James Lake's. If specimens of this kind had been preserved of the different *tons* that have succeeded one another for twenty centuries last past, how interesting would they have been! To compare the vanities and puppyisms of the Greek and Roman, and Gothic, and Moorish, and ecclesiastic reigning fine gentlemen of the day with one another, and the present age, must be a high entertainment to a mind that has a turn for a mixture of contemplation and satire; and to do you justice, Fanny, you paint well; therefore send me more and more."

This was written in 1776, only a year or two before Miss Burney's "Evelina" had done for fiction what Reynolds' "Admiral Keppel" had done for portrait painting. With "Evelina" the world starts afresh, and instead of watching with a sort of dim curiosity the strange adventures of Toms or Josephs, and the trials of Pamelas and Amelias, we find ourselves in the society of Evelina and her friends and acquaintances without feeling in the least out of date. It is like passing from a wilderness of rhubarb and horse-radish into a garden of roses and pinks. Page after page of Fanny Burney's diary might be quoted, and scene after scene from "Evelina," to show what English Society had become; but there is no excuse for doing so in a book of this sort until Evelina and her authoress have been as effectually superseded in the hearts of English readers as she has superseded the roughshod sons of Pegasus who trampled the road before her. As students we can still read and admire the genius of Fielding and Smollett, but with the characters they delineate we have nothing in common. If I met Pamela in the street I do not for the life of me know what I should talk to her about, while as for Joseph Andrews or Peregrine Pickle, I should feel more inclined to hand them over to the servants. But Evelina! The heart-strings jerk at the very thought; while even Madame Duval might help one to

pass a very amusing evening at Earl's Court. But let us see what our painters are doing.

There is a letter of Charlotte Burney's published in Mrs. Ellis's edition of Fanny's early diary and correspondence that contains its own excuse for its being quoted here, not only as a description of Society, but also as mentioning one of the minor illustrators of the Society of his time, Edward Burney. "The masquerade at the Pantheon," she writes to her sister, on the 10th April 1780, "*was rather thinnish*, owing, as they suppose, to so many people seeing masks—but there was one person there I fancy you'll be a little surprised to hear of . . . no other than Mr. Edward Burney—papa gave him his Proprietor's Ticket, and the dress cost him nothing but a day's work, for he went as a native of Otaheite, so he cook'd up a dress out of Jemm's Otaheite merchandise. I contrived to go to York Street that night to tea, and saw his dress, which was a very good one, he went privately to Sir Joshua's and took a sketch of Omiah's dress, which he copied in his *own* pretty easily . . . [the further description of this it costs me a pang to omit]—but I have something to tell you about Edward that I think you will not be displeased at. He has just finished three stain'd drawings in miniature, designs for 'Evelina'—and most sweet things they are. The design of the first volume is the scene of Ranelagh after the disaster of Madame Duval and Monsieur du Bois. He had just caught the moment when Madame French is going to dash the candle out of the Captain's hand; he says he was very much puzzled how to give Madame Duval the *beau-reste*, but we think he has succeeded delightfully. But Monsieur Slippery is *my* favourite figure. I do think it a most incomparable one indeed! So miserably *triste!* He has taken him shivering by the fire. Evelina is introduced into all three, and a most lovely creature he has made of her, but it's whimsical enough that there must certainly be a likeness between Edward's Evelina and Miss Streatfeild, as *separately* and *apart* (as Sir Anthony Branville says) Susan and I were both struck by the resemblance. The subject in the second volume is the part where Evelina is sitting in that dejected way, leaning her arm on the table, and Mr. Villars is watching her at the door before she

BUCKINGHAM HOUSE. *From a Water-colour Drawing by Edward Dayes. Victoria and Albert Museum.*

perceives him. The design for the third volume is as affecting as that for the second, it is the scene between Evelina and her father when she is kneeling and he in an agony is turning from her. I think there can't be a greater proof of Edward's having read and felt every passage in the book than these drawings. My father is so pleased with them that he has shown them to Sir Joshua Reynolds and ask'd him whether there would be any impropriety in putting them into the Exhibition? Sir Joshua highly approved of the proposal, and sure enough into the Exhibition they are to go, and Mr. Barry, who is mightily struck with them, has promised of his own accord to endeavour to procure a good place for them—Sir Joshua was amazed that he could do anything original so well, as he had seen nothing but copies before of his doing—he said some very handsome things of them, and was much pleased with the picture (that Edward had introduced into Mr. Villars' parlour) of Dr. Johnson, as he says he thinks it very natural for so good a man as Mr. Villars to have a value for Dr. Johnson. But pray, my dear Fanny, write me word of what you think of all this. It is a very *popular* subject, and they are to be inserted in the catalogue 'Designs for Evelina.'"

Another illustrator of "Evelina" was John Hamilton Mortimer, R.A., an artist whose work has been unaccountably neglected. He was a native of Sussex, and when he came to London in 1760 he made a lucky hit in painting the Royal coach, for the King was so pleased with the public attention it attracted when he drove abroad in it that he gave Mortimer some encouragement. His rather loose habits are supposed to have interfered with his success, though Cunningham is probably nearer the mark in explaining that Mortimer lost patronage from want of skill or want of inclination (when painting portraits) "to dip his brush in the hues of heaven and soothe the fair or the vain, so that he had no chance of profitable success in that line."

His etchings of Shakespearian and other subjects are, at least, as valuable as those of his contemporaries, Bartolozzi, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffmann, while his picture of himself at the National Portrait Gallery is a great deal more interesting than the common

run, and shows him to have been a skilful and accomplished painter. The illustration opposite this page is reproduced from a drawing of a family group, in my own collection, that may possibly be a sketch for the picture mentioned in the Academy catalogue of 1778 as "a small family picture, full length," though it is more probably a suggestion for the large picture at Shardeloes of the Drake family, which Edwards mentions as having been painted in 1777 or 1778. The picture is widely different in detail, and contains three more men—sons and sons-in-law of William Drake—than the drawing; but the general scheme is the same, including the father seated by the table, on which is a globe, and examining the plans of the house then newly built in such exquisite style by the brothers Adam. As this picture has never, I believe, been exhibited, it may be worth while to note a few of the points in which it differs from my drawing. In the first place, the arrangement of the background is similar, but instead of the sea view is a landscape, apparently the view from the house, of Amersham. The grouping of the furniture is the same, but the pieces themselves are not, and the floor is covered with an oriental carpet. Seated in the chair on our right is a gentleman in uniform, and between him and the table are two others standing. On the sofa on our left are two ladies, one with a tambour frame and the other with a spool of thread, while in the place of the dog there is an open work-basket. Behind the sofa is standing a gentleman in black, presumably the Rev. John Drake, who was Rector of Amersham for fifty years.

Before leaving "Evelina," we may mention a couple of Miss Burney's acquaintances, of whom one, at least, was a very considerable figure as a portrait painter. This was Catherine Reid, whose skill in crayon portraits earned her the title of "The English Rosalba." Fanny Burney alludes to her as "the famous paintress," and records two visits to her and her niece, Miss Beatson, who was also an artist, which are perhaps worth quoting. "Miss Reid is shrewd and clever," she writes (in 1774, when Miss Reid must have been quite an old lady), "where she has any opportunity given her to make it known; but she is so very deaf, that it is a fatigue to attempt any conversation with her. She is most exceedingly ugly,

A Family Group. *From a drawing for the picture at Shardeloes by J. H. Mortimer. Randall Davies, F.S.A.*

and of a very melancholy, or rather discontented, humour. . . . Miss Beatson is a very young and very fine girl, not absolutely handsome, yet infinitely attractive; she is sensible, smart, quick, and comical; and has not only an understanding which seems already to be mature, but a most astonishing genius for drawing, though never taught. She groups figures of children in the most ingenious, playful, and beautiful variety of attitudes and employments in a manner surpassing all credibility, but what the eye itself obtains: in truth she is a very wonderful girl."

Miss Beatson married a couple of years later, which may possibly account for posterity hearing no more of her wonderful talent. Her husband was Charles Oakley, who was made a baronet in 1790, and Governor of Madras in 1794.

In February 1775 Fanny paid another visit to Miss Reid, and gives an amusing account of her eccentricity, which, at that particular moment, was centred (if I may say so) on the making of a petticoat. "Her crayon drawings," she notes, "nearly reach perfection; their not standing appears to me the only inferiority they have to oil-colours; while they are new nothing can be so soft, so delicate, so blooming. . . . She is a very clever woman, and in her profession has certainly *very* great merit; but her turn of mind is naturally melancholy. . . . When the *foul fiend* is not tormenting her she is even droll and entertaining."

Nelly Beatson was disobliging on this occasion, and refused to show her drawings, but "as we were going," Fanny continues, "Miss Reid called me, and said she wanted to speak to me. 'I have a favour to ask of you,' said she, 'which is that you will sit to me in an attitude.' I burst out in laughter, and told her I was then in haste; but would call soon and talk about it. I cannot imagine what she means; however, if it is to finish any *burlesque* picture, I am much at her service." Unfortunately, she never did call on Miss Reid again.

John Singleton Copley, whom we were fortunate enough to welcome in England a year or two before the Declaration of Independence, was content, like West before him and Whistler since, to stay with us; and in the intervals between painting such

momentous scenes as the death of Chatham, the French at St. Helier, or the "Arrest of the Five Members," endeared himself to his country's oppressors and their posterity by such charming family groups as that of the Sitwell family, which, by Sir George's kind permission, is here reproduced.

That Copley was an able draughtsman is evident enough from his two large pictures in the National Gallery, and in the National Art Library at South Kensington is a series of his studies for the repulse of the floating batteries at Gibraltar, for which it is to be hoped that room will be found for exhibition when the new buildings are open. Most of his work is in America, where he is said to have painted between two and three hundred portraits and other pieces before he came to Europe, and whatever there may be in England is seldom seen. Considering how great a number of single portraits were painted, it is the more regrettable that we have not more examples of Copley, who was so excellent a composer of pictures of living people. It seems to have been a tradition in England that only gods and goddesses were suitable for painting in numbers, or scriptural characters, or heroes and heroines of drama and history, and the living men and women were only to be painted singly. How much more interesting Thornhill would have been if he had condescended to illustrate the scenes he lived in instead of the celestial and mythical groups by which he is now distantly recognised. How much more would Fuseli now be thought of if, instead of scenes from Shakespeare, he had painted the actual people he met. His drawings of contemporary people, that occasionally come to the surface at Christie's, are full of charm and wonder, and could he have brought himself to earth and forsworn raw pork for supper, his pictures would probably be now as highly prized as those of any of his contemporaries.

Copley seems to have followed Zoffany in his fondness for family pictures, and Cunningham, after alluding to a very fine group of Copley himself, his wife and children, in which he says "there is much nature in the looks of the whole and some very fine colouring," goes on to mention an amusing instance of what

THE CHILDREN OF FRANCIS SITWELL, ESQ. *From the painting by J. S. Copley.* *Sir George Sitwell, Bart.*

was required of the artist in this direction. A certain man came to him, and had himself and his wife and seven children all included in a family piece. "It wants but one thing," said the man, "and that is the portrait of my first wife." "But," said the artist, "she is dead, you know, sir—what can I do? She is only to be admitted as an angel." "Oh no, not at all," answered the other, "she must come in as a woman; no angels for me." The portrait was added; but some time elapsed before the person came back. When he returned he had a strange lady on his arm. "I must have another cast of your hand, Copley," he said. "An accident befell my second wife: this lady is my third, and she is come to have her likeness included in the family picture." The painter complied; and the likeness was introduced, and the husband looked with satisfaction on his three spouses. Not so the lady; she remonstrated; never was such a thing heard of—out her predecessors must go. The artist painted them out accordingly, and had to bring an action at law to obtain payment for the portraits which he had obliterated.

The picture of the painter and his family above mentioned is now in Boston, America. It was last seen in England at the Exhibition of 1862, where it was greatly admired for its "composition, drawing, force of expression, and fine colour." The Sitwell picture may readily be accorded praise for the same qualities, to which may be added another that is perhaps the rarest of all in these family groups, namely vivacity. To group a family in their natural surroundings sounds easy enough—but how few have ever accomplished it successfully! Holbein's famous drawing of the More family in their house at Chelsea is one of the great examples, but one feels that they were all there for no other purpose than making a family record. Hals' Van Bereslyn family at the Louvre is in reality much more successful, for though one sees that the parents knew they were sitting there to be painted, their children are so naturally occupied that one feels, or at least imagines, *they* did not know it. Two of them are occupied with a young bird that has been snatched from its nest in the wood at whose edge the family are grouped. The others are playing with flowers, while the two adult women are

engrossed with the children. Now this is exactly what would happen if, as is intended by the painter to be imagined, he made a sketch of them just as they were. The parents, who commissioned the work, are conscious of being painted. The children are not; while the grown-up women—whether they are nurses or other—are too much occupied with the children to know whether they are conscious or not. The result is a perfectly natural picture, brimming with life.

Copley, it need hardly be said, was not of the same rank as Hals; but in this picture of the Sitwells we can see that he had something of the secret of making a picture live of itself besides charming the beholder. He takes Miss Sitwell and stands her in the best light at the open window in one of the new rooms at Renishaw, through which a charming view of the North Derbyshire hills makes an effective background for her, on either side being the plain green wall of the room, pink window curtains, marble chimney-piece, and a pot of flowers to relieve a dark corner. He observes that she is delightfully dressed, in a cool and airy white frock, low-necked, and is wearing the most enchanting hat with a diaphanous brim, which he can make into a nimbus, though without stopping out the feathers and ribbons that can be seen through it. He admires her striped sash, which he finds very useful in breaking the monotony of the white frock, and does not object to her holding an open music book as a hint of her accomplishments. Meantime her two little brothers had been building a card house on the floor; and if it was not so nearly in front of her when they began it, it is now very usefully placed in the foreground, and is obviously more interesting than the wheelbarrow that balances it. Hart, the youngest boy, appears to have been lured from architecture to the true but baser uses of the cards, and to have selected a thumping hand. The card house has reached the second storey, under the able attentions of Francis, when in comes Sitwell, the son and heir, from riding, and throwing his hat on the floor, by way of deference to his sister, of whom he takes no other notice for the moment, he proceeds jocularly to overthrow his little brothers' card house with his whip. Now it is the recognised characteristic of eldest

A Family Group. *From a silhouette by Theuerd. Sir George Sitwell, Bart.*

brothers in all ages to slight their sisters, and domineer over their little brothers. They are encouraged in it by their parents, from generation to generation, until it has become an hereditary trait by which they are easily distinguished. Consciously or not, Copley uses this characteristic in painting his family group, and the effect is a living picture, and not a mere collection of likenesses; one feels that if this was not actually the way the picture came to be composed, it might very well have been. As it happens, Sitwell, the heir, is evidently a very charming young fellow, and his instinctive domineering is not of a nature to be the least resented by his small brothers, who obviously love him very much. Copley, too, seems to have regarded him as a more interesting figure than his sister, though she has the place of honour, but the whole thing is so nicely balanced, both as a picture and as a family record, that it would be difficult to find a better exemple of what a family picture ought to be. One would like to have had Garrick's opinion upon it.

Another delightful group of the Sitwell family, which I have very kindly been allowed to reproduce, is the silhouette opposite page 68. This, I am informed, bears an unmistakable resemblance in some of its details to a similar group that was reproduced in *The Girls' Realm* in June 1899, as the work of an artist named Thonard, who lived at 18 Wells Street, taught drawing, and took likenesses, "singly and in groups, in the genteelest taste." His technique—*meccanismo* would be a fitter term, as he is supposed to have used some kind of machine—was to trace real shadows, and afterwards reduce and compose them into groups.

Copley's picture of the three youngest daughters of George III., which is now at Buckingham Palace, is still more brilliant than that of the Sitwell children. For Copley was certainly not the sort of man to let Royalty interfere with youth, and though the picture was to be something more than an ordinary family portrait, the first thing the artist evidently did was to make friends with the children, even if, as is recorded, he wearied the attendants, the dogs, and even the parrot, with the extraordinary pains he took in painting the picture. The youngest, about two years old—this

picture was also painted in 1785—is seated in what Mr. Lionel Cust rather timidly describes as "a wooden chair or go-cart," but which is evidently the forerunner of what is now vulgarly known as a "pram," a stout wooden contrivance on four wheels, drawn by a handle like a bath chair, and large and substantial enough for the second sister to perch herself somehow on the back of it behind the hood. The eldest girl is holding the handle with her right hand, while in her left she brandishes a tambourine, turning towards the baby; so that the whole composition is a sort of triumphal procession about to start; and the rowdy-dow is accentuated by the enjoyment of the three dogs. If I have rather elaborated the descriptions of this and the Sitwell picture, it is because it seems to me that the significance of the various figures in these compositions of Copley's, which proves to be the most important factor in their success, is apt to be overlooked; for in the "Old Masters" catalogue the two principal figures in the Sitwell pictures are actually described as *seated*, while even Mr. Cust speaks of the Princess Sophia as *standing* behind her infant sister, whereas it is quite evident that she is seated on the back of the cart—unless indeed she is standing on one leg—and the way she is brought into relation with the baby is not only very happy in itself, but adds prodigiously to the vivacity of the whole group.

About Zoffany and his conversation pieces there is less need to particularise, as his name is already so familiar—if only from Gilbert's immortal couplet in the Major-General's song—

> "I can tell a genuine Raphael from Gerard Dow's or Zoffany's.
> I know the Croaking Chorus from the 'Frogs' of Aristophanes,"

while his pictures are fetching higher and higher prices when they come up at Christie's. He is better known, in fact, as a painter of conversation pieces—whether an English drawing-room, a cock-fight at Lucknow, or the Tribuna at Florence—than of anything else. That he was not an Englishman gives his work the greater value, as all Englishmen seem to have been ashamed of painting their surroundings as they actually were, and the work of Laroon, Mercier, Gravelot, Boitard, or Copley, who, coming fresh to these barbarous

Children of George III. *By J. S. Copley. Buckingham Palace. From a photograph by W. E. Gray.*

shores, were so struck with the naïve simplicity of English life that their renderings of it exactly as it appeared to them, are far more convincing in their actual representation than those of Reynolds, or even Hogarth.

To Zoffany, the prim English parlour must have seemed fascinating, and he paints it with a zest that is entirely absent from the efforts of Augustus Egg, or of the pre-Raphaelite younger-brotherhood, who merely used it as a background for some sentimental vapouring, which at the moment, perhaps, may have passed for inspiration, and has now a certain charm that we miss in the glare of the modern competition for sensationalism. For Zoffany, the parlour was something more than a background; it was a machine that contained the people he was painting; and it not only contained them, but it also summed them up. It was the same with the drawing-room—save that there was, as might be supposed, less of the machine about it than the setting for a somewhat grander scene; but the point is the same—his people occupy the room they happen to be in, with precisely the air of being discovered there without knowing it, and, consequently, without any appearance of having been arranged into a lively but artificially natural group such as we have seen in the works of Hogarth and Copley. How true this is, if indeed any one doubted it, is evident when one sees how little, in effect, Zoffany's pictures lose by reproduction. Of all the illustrations here given, there are few as successful as these two of Zoffany's, and of the two it will hardly be guessed which was photographed with every modern appliance during the present year, and which with the imperfect apparatus of exactly forty years ago. Both are life-like representations of what was going on in a room at a particular moment; and while Hogarth could hardly conceal a certain skill and sometimes a kind of bravado in disregarding the pompous conventionalities, and while Reynolds must cast his eyes up to Heaven, or invoke the spirit of Paul Veronese, before he could do justice to the nobility or the charm of his illustrious sitters, this cold-blooded but skilful foreigner depicted the familiar life of this great nation's nobles with as much unconcern as if they were so many trades-

men and their families whom he was observing unperceived through the keyhole.

How successful, and indeed how charming, Zoffany could be may be seen from the examples here given, which are from pictures belonging to the Countess Cowper and Lord Sherborne respectively. In the former we see George, third Earl Cowper, and his Countess, Mr. and Mrs. Gore and the two Misses Gore, as naturally grouped as though Zoffany had simply reproduced a kodak snapshot taken in passing the window, out of which one of the younger ladies, not being engaged in the concert, and tiring for the moment of her book, has happened to catch sight of him as she looks up. The other, if it is by comparison a little less spontaneous in effect than the first, is still extraordinarily natural and unaffected. It represents James Lennox Naper (afterwards Dutton) and his second wife Jane, daughter of Christopher Bond, their son James, first Lord Sherborne, and their daughter Jane Mary, who married Thomas Coke, first Earl of Leicester. No wonder that pictures like this were not only popular, but even acceptable to the fastidious Walpole. "I dined to-day at the exhibition of pictures with the Royal Academicians," he writes to Sir Horace Mann, on 22nd April 1775. "We do not beat Titian or Guido yet. Zoffany has sent over a wretched Holy Family. He is the Hogarth of Dutch painting, but no more than Hogarth can shine out of his own way. He might have drawn the Holy Family if he had seen them *in statu quo*." In criticising the Tribuna picture, again, he concludes: "However, it is a great and curious work, and Zoffany might have been better employed. His talent is representing natural humour; I look upon him as a Dutch painter polished and civilised. He finishes as highly, and renders nature as justly, and does not degrade it as the Flemish school did. . . ."

Of the sporting proclivities of the English in this century there are fewer examples in contemporary art than might be supposed, and such as there are can hardly be regarded as generally illustrative of Society, but are rather interesting in their respective departments of sports. Cricket, as we have seen, was depicted by Hayman, and skating by Julius Cæsar Ibbetson, a painter who came within measurable dis-

A Family Party. *From the painting by Zoffany. Countess Cowper.*

A Family Group. *From the painting by Zoffany. Lord Sherborne.*

CRICKET. *From an engraving by Benoist after the painting by F. Hayman.*

SKATING. *From a print after the painting by J. C. Ibbetson.*

A Country Race Course. *From an engraving after W. Mason.*

tance of Richard Wilson in landscape, and quite equalled Morland in depicting rural life. Sartorius is a name familiar to lovers of racing, as well as Wootton. The example selected in this chapter, by William Mason, is one of a pair of engravings that are not very widely known; and another by the same hand, the subject of which is a coach being driven through the high street of a county town, is quite as rare. All three of these are of a quality and spirit that excite some surprise at Mason's name not being better known, and if the sporting faternity were not so easily pleased with the reproductions of ridiculous coaching and racing prints of the early nineteenth century that now fetch such high prices, it is possible that his work might have a little more of the recognition it undoubtedly deserves.

Equestrian portraits were so rarely painted, and so pompously, that the work of George Stubbs is more than usually interesting, especially when it happens to be a conversation piece—or at least a family group—as well as the mere delineation of a horse. One of his most charming pictures is that of Josiah Wedgwood and his family, painted in 1780, now in the possession of Mr. Cecil Wedgwood, who has kindly allowed it to be reproduced. The scene is Etruria Hall, and in the distance may be seen the smoke of the pottery, while at Josiah's elbow is a specimen of its production. The children are Susannah (Mrs. R. W. Darwin), John, Josiah, Tom, Kitty, Marianne, and Sarah—the last-named being the child by the go-cart, who was so little satisfied with her likeness that for many years she had the picture turned with its face to the wall.

Another of Stubbs' family pieces, that of Lord Ilchester, Mr. Digby, and Mr. James, who are represented as resting during the enjoyment of partridge-shooting, was exhibited with the National Portraits in 1867; while in the following year were shown two more which he painted for the Duke of Richmond, the one a shooting party with Lord Holland, Lord Albemarle, and others, the other of the Duchess of Richmond and Lady Louisa Lennox on horseback watching a string of racehorses training. These were painted in 1760, and in 1762 he also did a large picture of Lord Albemarle embarking to the Havana expedition; and in the same year a picture

at Eaton called "The Grosvenor Hunt," with portraits of Lord Grosvenor, his brother Thomas Grosvenor, Sir Roger Mostyn, and others. His chief occupation, however, was in painting horses, before he devoted himself to the publication of "The Anatomy of the Horse," and his price for an equine portrait was no less than a hundred guineas. A very charming subject, entitled "Refreshment at St. James'," by Charles Ansell, was engraved by his son, George Townley Stubbs, in 1789.

Even to mention all of the charming illustrators of various social scenes at the close of the century is hardly possible in so slight a sketch as this must necessarily be, and the examples by Dighton, Russell, M. Haughton, and Edward Dayes which have been selected for reproduction are but a bare indication of the sort of work that was now being accomplished by artists whose names are comparatively unknown; but to Rowlandson, of all his contemporaries, it is only just to pay some passing tribute in taking leave of our subject; for while our two illustrations, taken from a print and a drawing kindly lent by Mr. G. Harland Peck, certainly show him at his best, it would require not two only but a couple of score to give any adequate idea of how wide a field his "best" covered, when he was giving free expression to his wonderful feeling for all he saw around him, and was not working simply for the publisher. His pen never seemed to tire—a reed pen, whose outlines were filled in with the most delicate washes of yellow, pink and blue, that the modern water-colourist seems to know nothing about—and we can follow him as he flits like a bee over the garden of rural England, lighting on a hundred little wild-flowers of country life, that, but for him, we should never have noticed. To the general public, indeed, Rowlandson's work as a caricaturist is too well known to be very dear, and his political and social broad-sheets, though they earned him enough money and fame in the coarse clamour of the Regency, have considerably effaced his real talent for depicting everyday life with a charm and naturalness that have hardly been equalled by any English artist, not even forgetting Gainsborough and Morland. Much of his work belongs, of course, to the nineteenth century, and his influence on coloured illustration, so industriously fostered

THE FAMILY OF JOSIAH WEDGWOOD. *From the painting by George Stubbs. Cecil Wedgwood, Esq.*

SPRING GARDENS. *From a water-colour drawing by T. Rowlandson. G. Harland Peck, Esq.*

by Ackerman, has been well demonstrated in Mr. Martin Hardie's recent book; but of his earlier work, and especially that portion of it which was purely spontaneous, the collector alone knows anything. As it is, the nation may be content that some half-dozen—and those by no means of the best—of his sketches are to be seen at the South Kensington Museum, and can hardly grumble at his name being unknown at the National Gallery. Were it probable, or even possible, that another benefactor like Mr. Tate should realise how his countrymen appreciate a gift, or even enjoy a legacy, he could find fewer objects that would yield more agreeably surprising results than the formation of a public gallery of paintings and drawings by minor English artists. Over its portico might be inscribed the stanza from Roubiliac's poem above quoted:—

"*Ne peus-tu pas, en admirant*
Les Maîtres de la Grèce et ceux de l'Italie,
Rendre justice également
À ceux qu'a nourris ta Patrie?"

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